

**The Role of Non-Competitive Multi-Party
Legislative Elections in Mubarak's Egypt**

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Abstract

In this thesis, the role of non-competitive multi-party legislative elections in Mubarak's Egypt is examined. The personalised authoritarian system of rule which was established in Egypt after Nasser and the other Free Officers took power in 1952, is assessed in order to illustrate how it has been preserved for over four decades, not simply as a result of the immense formal powers which Nasser vested in the Presidency, but also as a result of the disparate clientelist strategies adopted by Nasser and his successors, Sadat and Mubarak. Clientelist tactics which further contribute towards inhibiting the development of formal political groupings and thus the possibility of successful challenges to the system of personal authoritarian rule. The role of non-competitive multi-party legislative elections in Mubarak's Egypt, is subsequently examined in this context. Namely as mechanism intended to further hinder the development of political groupings through the reaffirming and expanding of the clientelist structure of dependency and control linking central government to those on the periphery.

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Dedicated to my dearest:

. Mother and Father .

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Prof. Yapp has now retired, and one can only say that his retirement is a tremendous loss to the students who will never have the chance to benefit from his immense knowledge and experience. While Prof. Yapp taught me as an M.A. student, it was the result of his wise and much appreciated advice and insight that led me to the very fortunate position of furthering my education under the supervision of another tutor from my M.A. days, Dr Charles Tripp.

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Note on transliteration:

For transliteration purpose we have used a simplified version of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Given the distinctive inflections of Egyptian speech, it has been decided to transliterate Egyptians' names in a way that approximates the forms of those names as they would be recognised by the subjects themselves, modifying somewhat the classical orthography. This may also be applied to certain transliterated distinctive Egyptian expressions, institutions or places.

أ (glottal stop)	‘
إ (long vowel)	<u>a</u>
ب	b
ت	t
ث	<u>th</u>
ج	j
ح	<u>h</u>
خ	<u>kh</u>
د	d
ذ	th
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	<u>s</u>
ض	<u>dh</u>
ط	<u>t</u>
ظ	<u>z</u>
ع	’
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m

ن	n
ه	h
و (consonant)	w
و (long vowel)	<u>u</u>
ي (consonant)	y
ي (long vowel)	<u>i</u>
ˆfatha	a
kasra	e / i
ˆdumma	o / u

Chapter One

**Problem statement;
theoretical framework;
method of research;
and framework of analysis.**

1. Problem Statement

The political system in Egypt passed from a one party to a multi-party system in 1977 when the legalisation of opposition parties confirmed their return to the political arena after an absence of twenty-five years. Since then several parties have competed in legislative elections.¹ Yet the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), which is headed by the President, remains the largest and continues to maintain an absolute majority of seats in the People's Assembly. In such a context, multi-party legislative elections in Egypt do not affect the replacement or succession of government. The purpose of this study therefore is to examine what functions these elections actually perform in contemporary Egypt, and in particular, under the Mubarak regime. The role of co-option, clientelism, political individualism and parochialism are all examined. It is by understanding the dynamics of multi-party legislative elections on the basis of these factors that one can appreciate a personalised authoritarian regime's efforts to further consolidate its own position in the political arena.

¹ Whilst this study focuses on the role of legislative elections, the argument presented here can, to a large degree, be applied to non-competitive multi-party elections on the local level. It should be noted however, that a local "government" structure in the strict meaning of the term, does not (nor does central government intend it to) exist in contemporary Egypt. It is largely for this reason that the local political structure witnessed as a result of law 145 of 1988, its official label of "local government" being replaced by the more suitable term of "local administration". For a look at the nature and structure of local government/administration in Mubarak's Egypt, see H.H. Radwan, Democratization in Rural Egypt... (Spring 1994), Cairo. For an in-depth study of local politics under Nasser, see: I. Harik, The Political Mobilisation of Peasants... (1974), Bloomington and London.

The personalised authoritarian system of rule which was established in Egypt after Nasser and the other Free Officers took power in 1952, appears to have been preserved to date, not simply as a result of the immense formal powers which Nasser vested in the Presidency, but also as a result of the disparate clientelist strategies adopted by Nasser and his successors, Sadat and Mubarak. Clientelist strategies which further contribute towards inhibiting the development of formal political groupings and thus the possibility of successful challenges to the system of personal authoritarian rule.

In such a context, our main argument here is that Egypt's contemporary electoral arena is intended to function as a mechanism with which to reaffirm and, more importantly perhaps, expand, the regime's clientelist grip over political participation so as to also include political opponents and their respective supporters. This strategy is based on the logic that within a specific setting, a 'multi-party' electoral arena could be utilised by the regime as a mechanism with which to confer, at various levels of the political and social structure, the opportunity to be part of the existing political system, and in most cases to gain access to a share of the resources it commands. In doing so, disparate political activists and their potential supporters would be recruited into the regime's clientelist system of containment and control. This reduces the possibility of formal political parties and groupings emerging as serious challengers to the existing political order.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Elections lie at the heart of the democratic process, and the difference between democracy and other systems of rule is to be found in whether elections are held, and if so, what kind. The term democracy itself can mean many things depending on ideology, individual or context, but in general democracy denotes a system of government whereby "the principal office holders of the political system are

chosen by competitive elections in which the largest part of the population can participate."² In other words, democracy is a method of rule which should meet these three conditions:

"(1) Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organised groups (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; (2) A highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair elections such that no major (adult) social group is excluded (3) A level of civil and political liberties-freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom to form and join organisations- sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation."³

Definitions by other authors refer to similar conditions or principles.⁴ However, while such formal definitions are relatively straightforward, "democracy is not a quality of a social system which either does or does not exist, but a complex of characteristics which may be ranked in many different ways."⁵ In this respect, formal definitions can represent a major problem in that although many political systems may satisfy defined criteria, certain constraints "may often in practice make a system less democratic than it appears on paper."⁶ As one author notes:

"The technical regularities of the vote (access to the ballot box, counting the votes and so on) evidently do not guarantee [an election's] competitive character. Nor does a plurality of candidates or alternatives... Pluralist regimes are known in which coercion plays hardly any role in the conduct of electoral consultations but

² S.P. Huntington and C.H. Moore (1970), p509.

³ L. Diamond (1990), pp6-7.

⁴ Robert Dahl prefers the term "polyarchy" to democracy when referring to contemporary political systems that allow effective popular control but not self- rule. See: R. Dahl, 1971.

⁵ S.M. Lipset (1981), P73.

⁶ L. Diamond (1990), P6.

none the less have elections that are to all appearances non-competitive."⁷

Our concern in this research lies with electoral systems of this nature. Multi-party elections of this nature are sometimes classified as "exclusionary elections" and are characterised by the fact that the governments which hold them do not depend upon them for their continuance in office.⁸ Subsequently, if one commences the study of such elections, then it is necessary to concentrate attention on their functions for the rulers of a state, rather than their significance to the individual voter.

General characteristics of regimes
which hold such elections

Non competitive, democratic-style elections are mostly established by authoritarian conservative regimes,⁹ monarchical dictatorships¹⁰ or well established post-military regimes¹¹ who have "taken power, creating from above a government or privileged party rather than coming to power with the support of a movement-type party".¹² These political systems are predominantly characterised by a personalised method of rule, and as such, the state can best be understood as a government of men rather than laws.¹³ This means that while formal political institutions exist, these institutions are usually devices manipulated to maximise the personal power of the rulers rather than to define and impose universally accepted rules of political conduct and constraint.¹⁴ The adoption of a formal democratic framework can subsequently be understood in such terms. Accordingly, should authoritarian rulers adopt

⁷ A. Rouquié (1978), P20.

⁸ G. Hermet (1978), P5.

⁹ G. Hermet (1978), P5

¹⁰ J.J. Linz (1978), P51.

¹¹ A. Rouquié (1991), P128

¹² J.J. Linz (1978), P61.

¹³ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Rosenberg (1982), P10.

¹⁴ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Roseberg (1982), P11.

democratic institutions, they will do their utmost to ensure that such measures include "the simultaneous exclusion of the four principles which give such institutions their true democratic content: consensus concerning the rules of the game, political accountability of the rulers, the right to ample political representation, and alternation in power."¹⁵

What this means therefore, is that the concept of multi-party legislative elections cannot be looked upon as open competition between various political parties attempting to gain control of government on the basis of competing public policies or opinion. Nor can the implementation of a controlled multi-party electoral arena be regarded as planned first steps towards withdrawal from power in the foreseeable future. In fact, since the rulers do not particularly "consider the possibility of losing power",¹⁶ they tend to maintain a considerable distance from the electoral contest and leave such forms of participation to those on the periphery of power.¹⁷

Electoral competition between political parties in such systems therefore, may sometimes produce what appears to be "freely" elected representatives, but in reality, these public figures remain subservient to the real power-holders, whether such power-holders are found in the form of a King, President, or military leader. The National Assembly in Morocco for example comprises elected deputies representing various political parties. However, it is difficult for members to implement public policies since these deputies remain in a deferential position to King Hassan. As one author put it, the King's pre-eminent position dissipates the zeal and rhetoric of multi-party

¹⁵ L. Martins (1993), P88.

¹⁶ J.J. Linz (1978), P65.

¹⁷ A. Rouquié (1991), P128.

electoral campaigns.¹⁸ In defence of such personalised rule, King Hassan claims:

"I am obliged to personify power as strongly as possible, for people do not obey a programme or plan. They obey men, a team of men, and it is all for the best if that team is embodied in a chief and symbolised by one face, one voice, one personality."¹⁹

Similar situations in which the power of authoritarian rulers overwhelm the power of a multi-party parliament can be found in other Middle Eastern states including Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, as well as many Latin American states including Colombia, where a former foreign minister notes: "We have a constitutional façade, but behind that façade we have a military which is very powerful."²⁰ More recently, several African states such as Kenya, Botswana, The Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal also appear to be developing similar patterns of rule since their respective transitions from single party rule.

The electoral arena:

some government imposed constraints

The rulers who adopt these systems tend to impose a number of constraining conditions in order to ensure the arena of political contest remains under their stringent control. The laws regulating the licensing of opposition parties for example always demand a public commitment to the existing political order and the substantive acts of the regime.²¹ As the case of Jordan illustrates, the primary concern of King Hussein with regard to legalising political parties in 1991 was to ensure that "such parties agreed in advance to support the constitution and the monarchy".²² The same

¹⁸ M. Palmer (1989), P227.

¹⁹ J. Lacouture (1970), P7.

²⁰ M. Palmer (1989), P227.

²¹ J.J. Linz (1978), P62.

²² R. Owen (1992) P238. It should be noted that political groups were first permitted legal status in Jordan under the Political Parties Law of 1955. This however, was a very short-lived affair

situation is also witnessed in Morocco. When King Hassan attempted to recreate a system based on multi-party elections in 1977 potential parties were forced to demonstrate their allegiance to the King and his policies if they were to be allowed to compete.

In addition, authoritarian rulers can, and very often do, exercise a veto against the participation of certain groups or individual personalities. In most cases, such exclusionary measures are confined to those whom the rulers believe may have the potential to attract wide scale appeal and who may subsequently use such appeal to mobilise large sectors of the public against the regime. This can largely explain why political parties in certain North African states are granted legal permission to function only if they do not possess a broad social base within society.²³ Linz's observation of government caution towards electoral activities in Eastern Europe states such as Estonia and Latvia during the first half of the century is also evident in contemporary systems of this nature:

"...elections with licensed or controlled parties are unlikely to have [a] festive and revivalist character...The rulers are less likely to encourage this, because they are uncertain about the turn-out and the outcome."²⁴

Waterbury observed this phenomenon in contemporary Morocco. According to the author, King Hassan did not only place himself as arbiter of all political issues and groups, he intentionally prevented efforts of large-scale mobilisation of any sectors of society during elections, even favourable ones, for fear that they might eventually turn against him.²⁵ Such ambiguous electoral tactics can also be noted in Brazil's post-1964 authoritarian regime. One observer comments: "there was...a succession of arbitrary

since they were subsequently banned in April 1957 and remained so until 1991. See: R. Owen, (1992), P233-37.

²³ A. Hermassi (1994), P241.

²⁴ J.J. Linz (1978), P64.

²⁵ J. Waterbury (1970), P148.

modifications to the rules of the electoral game in order to diminish political competition, guarantee predictable outcomes, and to keep party alternation in government under strict control."²⁶ Again, the same patterns are evident in Egypt, as most patently illustrated prior to the 1984 elections. President Mubarak, arguably apprehensive of an unexpected electoral turn-out during the first legislative elections under his rule, went as far as to completely change the electoral laws in an attempt to curb potential opposition progress and to ensure his National Democratic Party maintained its dominant position within the arena of political contest.²⁷

General characteristics of non-competitive multi-party elections

The reluctance of personal authoritarian rulers to allow large-scale mobilisation of any sectors of society during elections, means that in contrast to plebiscitarian elections in mobilising single party systems, controlled multi-party elections do not endorse wide scale political indoctrination and propaganda on behalf of the regime. Instead, political participation is rather indirect and is embedded in a complex network of clientelist relations linking the periphery to the centre.²⁸ As such the government supported party is primarily made up of "a conglomerate of personalities, factions and interests without common ideological or programmatic positions,"²⁹ with elections turning out relatively simple and uncontroversial slogans such as "order", "economic progress" and "social justice". In most cases, contestants representing the government party are reduced to commending and advocating the achievements of public officials who do not actually take part in electoral contest³⁰ such as the

²⁶ L. Martins (1993), P77.

²⁷ R. Springborg (1989), P160: R. Owen (1994), P186.

²⁸ N. Chazan et al., (1988), P168.

²⁹ J.J. Linz, (1978), P65.

³⁰ J.J. Linz (1978), P65.

ruler and specific ministers.³¹ Opposition contestants are even more limited by the formal and informal boundaries set by the rulers on their activities and whatever their regard for the political system, it is highly unlikely that they would publicly question its legitimacy.³²

Non-Competitive multi-party elections
as a legitimization tool

Since such elections do not have any profound visible effect within the political arena, if the ruler derives some form of legitimacy from holding non-competitive multi-party elections, it is in a limited context. On the international level, such elections may for example, help to enhance a regime's standing on the international stage. Senegal's President Senghor for example, initiated limited electoral reforms which subsequently meant some opposition parties were allowed to compete in the 1978 legislative elections. Whilst he ensured that his own party maintained the majority of seats (82 percent of the votes cast), this move: "probably enhanced his international standing in the West as a leader of a regime that respects civil and political rights"³³ and indicative of this was the fact: "his party was the first in Africa to be admitted into the ranks of the moderate Socialist International."³⁴

International considerations were also among of the main reasons Egypt's late President Sadat decided to authorise a 'multi-party' arena. His government was, in the words of one author: "seeking political forms that would help its appeals to Western sources of support and cared little about making itself attractive to Communist countries."³⁵ The fact that legislative elections in which opposition parties participate, continue, even under Sadat's

³¹ Personal observation of Egypt's 1995 legislative elections.

³² J.J. Linz (1978), P65.

³³ R.H. Jackson and C. G. Roseberg (1982), P97.

³⁴ R.H. Jackson and C. G. Roseberg (1982), P97.

³⁵ W. Zartman (1990), p233.

successor, to have no affect on the replacement or succession of government, nevertheless, continues to help President Mubarak gain Western, especially American support. Egypt's non-competitive multi-party elections in other words, make: "it easier for the president and the US congress to provide aid, while very much reducing the possibility that Egypt will be criticised for human rights abuses."³⁶

It is worth taking into consideration however, the fact that a regime's international position, especially with regard to Western democratic nations, is, in the final analysis, determined on other, more important factors than the nature of its electoral system. In some instances, the electoral practice of a regime can count for very little. With regard to the U.S. for example:

"support can be enlisted for the foreign policy in question [and] for this purpose no precise criteria of what counts as "democracy" are needed; but foreign governments that do not share the official American world view, will find it hard to secure recognition in Washington as truly democratic, however liberal their electoral practices or their political philosophies."³⁷

Turning to the national level, it is noted that the whole concept of proclaiming democracy as a central political goal may help to provide some form of legitimacy for the rulers who hold them.³⁸ But this is likely to be because the ruler is attempting to illustrate his "commitment" to the general principles of holding elections rather than the possibility of government alternation.³⁹ The underlying fact however, is that the legitimacy of a regime which did not come to power as a result of competitive elections, is unlikely to be judged by the public, solely on the basis of

³⁶ R. Owen (1994), P190.

³⁷ L. Whithead (1991), p11.

³⁸ M.C. Hudson (1977), PP22-24.

³⁹ R.S. Milne (1973), P208.

electoral dynamics. This is explained in the comments of one author regarding the political system in Mexico, and can also be applied to similar non-competitive systems:

"Because the regime had originated in a revolutionary transformation rather than through an inclusive and widely accepted electoral process, public perceptions of regime legitimacy depended more on overall evaluations of government performance and the fulfilment of a comprehensive revolutionary programme than on government adherence to particular procedural requirements."⁴⁰

A similar point is also made by a prominent Egyptian writer, who notes (with reference to Sadat) that while in the West: "A new President or Prime Minister... will no doubt be expected to implement at least some of the programme he offered before his election... In the Third World the leader's legitimacy, and so his survival, depends on his achievements."⁴¹ Defining these achievements depends, invariably, upon the social, economic and political circumstances that each ruler individually confronts. The legitimacy derived by President Nasser following his ascent to power in post-1952 Egypt for example, may have been partly a result of his government's role in: "evicting the British from Egyptian bases, nationaliz[ing] the Suez Canal, and emerg[ing] victorious from the 1956 invasion of Egypt by England, France and Israel."⁴² Socio-economic reforms in terms of land redistribution and developmental projects such as the Aswan High Dam, could also be regarded as factors which further contributed to his political legitimacy. As Hudson notes: "The Aswan High Dam scheme was not just an economic development project but an important legitimacy-building device, which explains in part Nasir's violent reaction to America's decision not to finance it."⁴³ Elections therefore played a minimal role in the legitimacy

⁴⁰ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P126.

⁴¹ M.H. Heikal (1983), P55.

⁴² M. Palmer (1989), P160.

⁴³ M.C. Hudson (1977), P239.

stakes and thus functioned within the limited framework of a one-party system.

Furthermore, the legitimacy of Nasser's successors, Sadat and Mubarak respectively, could hardly have been the result of the non-competitive multi-party arena that followed. In fact, opposition parties were not even granted formal authorisation to function until the period between 1978 and 1979. In other words, just over three years before Sadat's assassination. That Egypt's 'multi-party' elections do not appear to constitute the basis of regime legitimacy in the Mubarak era, is reflected in the words of one potential voter. In his words:

"The government is not all bad. Some are bad because they are corrupt and some because they are stupid and useless. But President Mubarak is good because he is trying very hard to solve the country's economic problems. Hasan Al-'Alfi [the then Minister of Interior] and 'Amr Musa [the Minister of Foreign Affairs] are also good... Al-'Alfi tries to control the police and make sure they do not hassle people for no reason at all and Musa seems to know what he is talking about... Really, it does not matter how these people get into government. What is important is that they do a good job."⁴⁴

It would seem that the rulers themselves are largely responsible for the fact that non-competitive multi-party elections do not have much legitimising significance within the political arena. In the absence of a dominant party based on a strong ideological or programmatic position and their reluctance to endorse wide scale mobilisation, the utilisation of such 'multi-party' elections, cannot, logically, be utilised as a major legitimization tool, as for example, is the case of mobilising single party elections. As one author explains:

⁴⁴ Personal interview with Ahmad Hasan, retired truck-driver, Helwan, Egypt, 14 November 1995.

"Without being assured of a turn-out that would give symbolic expression to the willingness of the people to participate within the regime, and fearful... of the number of votes the opposition might gain, [the rulers] are unlikely to attach much symbolic and legitimising significance to the elections"⁴⁵

In the final analysis, one can argue that the establishment and subsequent regulation of a multi-party system using various measures to ensure electoral results with foregone conclusions can appear as an unnecessary arrangement for authoritarian rulers who already control the major levers of coercion and maintain centralised command over the political apparatus without being effectively bound by any formal rules other than those which fit their own political or personal convenience. However, as Schmitter points out, for such elections to be held in the first place "they must have some reason or motive; they must contribute in some way to sustaining...the mode of political domination. They must have some functions...or they would not exist."⁴⁶ On this basis, it is perhaps best if attention is turned to another angle: the role of these elections within the framework of clientelist co-option and control.

Non-Competitive multi-Party elections as an instrument of co-option and clientelist control

In the absence of effective constitutional-legal rules of restraint, one can argue that authoritarian rulers need to resort to alternative and more informal strategies in efforts to ensure the maintenance of centralised control over political activity. These strategies may rest upon attempts to cultivate the support and loyalty of subordinates on the basis of co-option and patronage. Of course they can, and at times do, resort to coercion, but as Jackson notes:

"...the method of intimidation and coercion has built-in costs: to the extent that

⁴⁵ J.J. Linz (1978), P64

⁴⁶ P.C. Schmitter (1978), P149.

opposition is suppressed, it is possible only to secure acquiesce, not active co-operation. But to survive, most personal rulers ... rely on the willing co-operation of other political actors, and generally, they attempt to secure it by the stratagems of co-option, consultation, agreement, and patronage - especially the last."⁴⁷

Authoritarian rulers can also attempt to deal with opponents on similar principles: either by actively contriving to eliminate them or attempting to win their co-operation and adherence.⁴⁸ In the long term, broadening the power base of the regime to co-opt potentially subversive new elements appears a more viable option as the extended use of repression can have profound consequences on political stability should opponents turn radical in efforts to counteract government actions.⁴⁹ As Anderson explains:

"All governments face dissent, but it is usually the government itself that selects the arena and chooses the weapons with which the battle is fought. Regimes that do not recognise [such] mechanisms ... appear to run a much greater risk of wholesale opposition to the entire system than do governments that permit some form of the expression of dissent..."⁵⁰

In this context, the establishment of a multi-party arena can perhaps best be examined as an instrument of control which permits authoritarian regimes to "make sure dissent would be institutionalised and channelled, not spontaneous."⁵¹ Accordingly, by providing an arena of political contest whereby disparate political actors can participate, the power-holders are most likely to monitor their activities from a better angle than if these opponents were forced to resort to illegal and subsequent

⁴⁷ R.M. Jackson and C.G. Rosenberg (1982), P26.

⁴⁸ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Roseberg (1982), P25.

⁴⁹ M. Palmer (1989), PP104-111.

⁵⁰ L. Anderson (1987), P227.

⁵¹ D.C. Levy and K. Bruhn (1994), P192.

clandestine methods of participation. It is therefore no surprise that non-competitive elections in Portugal prior to 1974 have arguably been regarded as periods which extended the surveillance capacity of the regime and brought "police records up to date."⁵² While this may appear exaggerated, the general principles are prevalent in some form or other within most authoritarian systems of this nature, including Egypt, where the electoral register is also maintained by the police and where legal electoral activities are also constantly infiltrated by state security personnel.⁵³

As an instrument of control however, a non-competitive multi-party arena may be better understood in terms of clientelist relations. That is, it is the extension of patronage into the arena of political contest in order to reinvigorate and expand political clientelism and thus reaffirm government domination over political activity. Electoral practice after all, is not simply embedded in a political tradition but also in a specific socio-economic and cultural context. Thus elections may not necessarily have the same meaning in a complex industrialised society where political participation centres around organised groups based on socio-economic interests and conceptions, as they do in societies where "the modes of relationship favour primary groups, while secondary groups are weakly developed".⁵⁴

In the former, relatively full employment, social security, diverse opportunities and other characteristics which constitute the basis of modern liberal society lessen the possibilities of personal domination⁵⁵ and permit individuals the opportunity to affiliate with groups which are "voluntary, self generating, (largely) self-supporting

⁵² P.C. Schmitter (1978), P154.

⁵³ Personal communication with various political activists, and personal observation during 1995 election campaigns.

⁵⁴ A. Rouquié (1978), P22.

⁵⁵ Rouquié (1978), P24.

[and] autonomous from the state".⁵⁶ On this basis, state-society relations are based primarily on generalised reciprocity rather than on particularistic and hierachial bonds of clientage.⁵⁷ In developing countries however, the scarcity of resources and the general insecurities that emerge when reliable avenues to deal with problems of economic survival do not exist, tends to produce vertical patterns of dependency. Which in turn means that the particularistic and hierachial ties of clientelism are more likely to constitute the basis of state-society relations. In general, clientelism can be defined as a:

"personalized, affective, and reciprocal relationship between actors, or sets of actors, commanding unequal resources and involving mutually beneficial transactions that have political ramifications beyond the immediate sphere of dyadic relationships."⁵⁸

The difficulty in defining political clientelism in more specific terms is largely due to the fact it varies in form depending not only the political system in which it prevails, but also upon which level of the political system it is operating. Lemarchand and Legg also emphasis a similar point when noting that: "clientelism" cannot be meaningfully considered apart from the setting in which it exists. The forms which it takes depend to a considerable degree on the structure of society and on the political system in which it operates."⁵⁹ Basically, however, a clientelist structure is characterised by the patron-client relationship which, to borrow Scott's definition, is:

"...an exchange relationship between roles [and] may be defined as a special case of dyadic (two-person) ties involving a largely instrumental friendship in which an individual of higher socio-economic status (patron) uses his own influence and resources to provide protection or

⁵⁶ L. Diamond (1994), P5.

⁵⁷ L. Diamond, (1995), PP30-31.

⁵⁸ R. Lemarchand and K.Legg (1978), PP122-23.

⁵⁹ R. Lemarchand and K.Legg (1978), P127.

benefits, or both, for a person of lower status (client) who, for his part, reciprocates by offering general support and assistance, including personal services to the patron."⁶⁰

It is the process of reciprocity, the author stresses, which distinguishes patron-client ties from other relationships - such as those which are based upon formal authority or pure coercion - that can also link individuals of different status. As he put it:

"A patron may have some coercive power and he may also hold an official position of authority. But if the force or authority at his command are alone sufficient to ensure the compliance of another, he has no need of patron-client ties which require some reciprocity. Typically then, the patron operates in a context in which the community norms and the need for clients require at least a minimum of bargaining and reciprocity".⁶¹

The agrarian setting for example, in which a major landlord constitutes: "the major source of protection, of security, of employment, of access to arable land or to education, and of food in bad times...is in an ideal position to demand compliance from those who wish to share in these scarce commodities."⁶² In turn, the compliance which a patron obtains from his 'clients' is important in that it not only enhances his status within society, but more importantly perhaps, it: "represents a capacity for mobilising a group of supporters when he cares to."⁶³ The capacity of the patron to mobilise support from his clients in times of need, is sometimes further reinforced as a result of the dyadic or personal nature of patron-client ties. This assumption is based upon the view that the:

"continuing pattern of reciprocity that establishes and solidifies a patron-client

⁶⁰ J. C. Scott (1977), PP124-125.

⁶¹ J. C. Scott (1977), P125.

⁶² J. C. Scott (1977), P125.

⁶³ J. C. Scott (1977), P126.

bond often creates trust and affection between the partners. When a client needs a small loan or someone to intercede for him with the authorities, he knows he can rely on his patron; the patron knows, in turn, that "his men" will assist him in his designs when he needs them."⁶⁴

It should also be noted that the ties linking a client to his patron can, theoretically, be made even more enduring because of the fundamentally 'diffuse' nature of the relationship. What this means is that unlike formal contractual relations, the link between a patron and his client/s "is a very flexible one in which the needs and resources, and hence the nature of the exchange, may vary widely over time...[and can therefore] persist so long as the two partners have something to offer one another."⁶⁵

Within the larger socio-political framework therefore, a clientelist structure can be understood to exist when the patron-client relationship expands so that:

"Patrons exist at different levels of the society (national, regional, local) and the lower-level patrons are the clients of higher level patrons who have access to greater amounts and types of resources."⁶⁶

Whilst the expansion of the state apparatus into society constitutes the underlying process responsible for the establishment of such linkages,⁶⁷ the difference between one clientelist system and another is arguably dependent upon who ultimately controls (or at least exerts the most influence over) the greatest resources within society. Alex Weingrod for example, has stressed how the expansion of state power into society brings with it: "the establishment of new national and regional organisations, the initiation of new agricultural programs, the recruitment of cadres of

⁶⁴ J. C. Scott (1977), P126.

⁶⁵ J. C. Scott (1977), P126.

⁶⁶ L. Guasti (1977), P423.

⁶⁷ R. Lemarchand (1981), P18.

workers [and] the commitment of huge capital funds".⁶⁸ The consequence of which is that:

"These new resources of jobs and funds are typically administrated or controlled by political party members or by persons designated by the parties... This close association of party with government opens new possibilities for patronage; once having gained control of these resources the parties use them to serve their own electoral ends."⁶⁹

Hence, this process, which the author refers to as "party-directed patronage" can be used to explain how certain political parties use clientelism as a means to restrict genuine electoral competition and thus protect their dominant position in the existing power structure. The party's use of patronage for such purpose, it should be noted, can generally be distinguished on two main levels. On one level, there is the "party machine". On the other, there is the "party of social integration".⁷⁰ The emergence of a "party machine" (labelled by Lemarchand the "orthodox machine")⁷¹ is predominantly: "a question of an organism responding to particular demands in exchange for votes."⁷² What this means is that the "party machine" functions through the clientelist manipulation of vulnerable people such as rural migrants and foreign immigrants. Most of whom are located in crowded urban areas where unemployment is rife and there exists little avenues to help them cope with problems of economic survival. In such an environment, the party is usually in the position to 'buy', through brokers, the votes of these people, in return for "concrete short-run benefits".⁷³ As Rouquié explains with regard to the United States during the first part of this century:

⁶⁸ A. Weingrod (1977), p326.

⁶⁹ A. Weingrod (1977), pp326-27.

⁷⁰ A. Rouquié (1978), P31.

⁷¹ R. Lemarchand (1981), P19.

⁷² A. Rouquié (1978), P31.

⁷³ R. Lemarchand (1981), P21.

"Machine politics assumed its classical form in institutional contexts of competitive pluralism, notably in the United States before and after the First World War. Founded on the power of the 'boss' exercising power without responsibility, the election machine functioned thanks to the boss's services to a population that was often outcast and vulnerable. The boss brought often-indispensable assistance to immigrants and foreign minorities in crowded city areas; they used their votes as a piece of merchandise... When a machine was thoroughly entrenched in a ward, the opposition did not even bother to organise there. Thus, there was not only a non-competitive election, but also a single party."⁷⁴

The same situation, as the author continues, prevailed in urban Argentina, most notably in Buenos Aires where:

"The isolation and anonymity of urban life resulting from atomisation and immigrant uprooting are equally responsible for the success of the Radical Party machine in Buenos Aires at the beginning of the century... The district chiefs (*caudillos de barrio*) provided help, charity and credit. Party committees even sold low-priced food, known as 'Radical bread' and 'Radical milk'."⁷⁵

Whilst the clientelist control of the vote by the "party machine" is based upon the exchange short-term material benefits, the party of "social integration" maintains a different, more intense, type of clientelist control. This is because a party of this nature (also labelled "mass patronage machine")⁷⁶ tends to preserve its dominant position in power on a long-term, if not permanent basis, by using "the resources of power" to grip "the state and society in a clientele network of extreme density."⁷⁷ What this means is that the party of social integration: "is

⁷⁴ A. Rouquié (1978), P31.

⁷⁵ A. Rouquié (1978), P31.

⁷⁶ R. Lemarchand (1981), P21-23.

⁷⁷ A. Rouquié (1978), P32.

much more in nature of a mass organisation, its resources are far more diversified (and so is its clientele), and its ramifications to the state bureaucracy are considerably more complex and extensive."⁷⁸ The Christian Democratic Party in Italy assumes the main characteristics of this complex, all-encompassing, clientelist party. In the words of one Italian politician:

"Clientelism... [used to evoke] the letter of recommendation from the notable, a practice still in existence and still frequent in Sicily, though less and less so. For at least fifteen years clientelism has been changing in nature and instead of being vertical ties as before, descending from the notable to the postulant... it now concerns entire (social) categories, coalitions of interests, groups of (private) employees, employees of public office or of regional enterprises. It is mass clientelism, organised and efficient... concessions granted no longer to the individual, but to favoured groups. In order to put this powerful machine to work, through time, the Christian Democrats have had to place party men at every level of power, in each key position... (Today clientelism) is a relationship between large groups and public power."⁷⁹

This type of clientelist control is even more evident, and constitutes the main reason, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) in Mexico has remained in power since the early part of this century. The PRI, which was created by President Plutarco Elias Calles in 1929, was regarded initially as "little more than a facade that ratified the political status quo."⁸⁰ However, even though opposition parties have formally existed since the late 1930's and 1940's,⁸¹ the fact the party has managed to maintain its dominant position for so long, and with relatively little

⁷⁸ R. Lemarchand (1981), PP21-22.

⁷⁹ Cited in M. Caciagli and F.P. Belloni (1981), PP35-36.

⁸⁰ S. K. Purcell (1981), P198.

⁸¹ For example, the conservative "National Action" party (PAN) was founded in 1939 and; the "Socialist Popular" party (PPS) was founded in 1948 and later re-organised in 1958. See K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P128.

need for coercion, is largely the result of the clientelist tactics instigated on behalf of the party by President Lázaro Cárdenas (1934-1940). Under his rule, new sectors within the PRI were specifically created to incorporate the military, the middle class, the workers and the peasants—all of whom he had organised into officially separate group entities. Once incorporated into party membership: "each of these groups, and especially the workers and peasants, was encouraged to regard itself as a corporate entity with interests that were distinct from, and often in conflict with, those of the locally-based strongmen [*caciques*]." ⁸²

Cárdenas further reinforced the workers and peasant's independence from the *caciques* through the provision of various rights and rewards. The workers for example, were provided with a re-organised and strengthened union and collective bargaining system, whilst at the same time he ensured their right to strike was reinforced. The peasants on the other hand, were given property which had previously been confiscated from large landowners during the 1910-17 social revolution. Such tactics were not insignificant since it also helped to institutionalise the party's dominant position within the political arena by ensuring: "the newly-organised peasants and workers were tied to an institution, the official party, rather than the ruler." ⁸³

The point here however, is that whilst the corporatist organisation that was created within the framework of the PRI acted: "as a countervailing force against the locally-based clientelist structure" ⁸⁴, at the same time, it helped the party build an alternate clientelist structure, which to date, allows it to dominate the Mexican political arena. As Purcell explains:

"[T]he manner in which the peasants and workers were incorporated made them

⁸² S.K. Purcell (1981), PP198-199.

⁸³ S.K. Purcell (1981), P199.

⁸⁴ S.K. Purcell (1981), P199.

extremely dependent on national leaders. Both groups had been organised before they had a strong sense of class identity that would have enabled them to define their true interests, select their own leaders and enter the political system on their own terms. As a result, the price they paid for the "gifts" of organisation, resources and rights, was high. Having entered the national system from a position of relative weakness, they would find it difficult, if not impossible, to increase their power over their new national patrons."⁸⁵

The manipulation of state resources by a political party to ensure that it is not simply individuals, but also disparate group entities that are dependent upon it is important with regard to elections from one particular angle. Namely that strategies aimed at creating such patterns of dependency encourage elections to function predominantly as a mechanism for reaffirming clientelist control. This, one can argue, is because if: "the machine or the party and its parallel hierarchies guarantees a minimum of social protection, the election enables the client" to pay his debt to the party and "by paying his debt, to deserve a patronal largesse once again."⁸⁶

The participation of opposition parties in such a context, does little to lessen the clientelist grip of the dominant party over state and society. Rather, the dominant party's monopoly of state resources can further strengthen its position if such resources are also used to tempt members of the opposition into co-optation. This problem was in fact a major issue in Mexico prior to the 1979 federal Chamber of Deputies elections. As a result of Mexico's 1976-77 economic crisis, the then President, López Portillo (1976-82), became "personally convinced" that broad reform of the "political party system and the electoral process" would help alleviate part of the crisis.⁸⁷ It was for this reason

⁸⁵ S.K. Purcell (1981), P199.

⁸⁶ A. Rouquié (1978), P34.

⁸⁷ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P131.

therefore, that opposition parties were particularly encouraged to participate in the 1979 elections. The fact was that most opposition organisations participated, however, with some hesitation. They were aware that participation in the reforms, of which the 1979 election was part, could "result in their co-optation by the established regime."⁸⁸ The opposition, as Middlebrook explains:

"were fully aware that minority representation in the executive-dominated Chamber of Deputies offered limited opportunities to effect substantial change. Furthermore, they had misgivings concerning the corruptive effects that access to government resources and opportunities for individual political advancement might have on opposition leaders."⁸⁹

Indeed, the 1977 political "liberalisation" reform: "marked an important departure in Mexican politics" since it led to: "more active [opposition] participation in the electoral process [thus] significantly improv[ing] the ability of opposition parties to articulate alternative public policies and widen their membership base."⁹⁰ Yet, as the author acknowledges, such "liberalisation" tactics also served to incorporate, under government-defined rules: "the most important unregistered opposition organisations into the existing party system without greatly increasing their real political influence."⁹¹

On another level: "the lack of opposition-party access to significant resources and power"⁹² may indeed be regarded as a major contributor to their subsequent "limited progress" within the electoral arena.⁹³ But this, one can argue, is not a wholly unexpected conclusion in view of the fact the

⁸⁸ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P133.

⁸⁹ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P133.

⁹⁰ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P143.

⁹¹ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P146.

⁹² K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P147.

⁹³ K.J. Middlebrook (1993), P147.

opposition were participating within a framework in which electoral domination by the PRI, since the early part of the century, has been closely linked with the downward flow of state-controlled patronage. Perhaps more important from the regime's view therefore, is not the outcome of elections. Rather, by actually encouraging the registered opposition parties to participate in such a patronage-dominated electoral arena, the chances of them becoming clientelistically dependent upon the regime (i.e. through the resources it controls and the necessity of being allocated a share of it if electoral gains are to be achieved) could be greatly enhanced. Indeed, as we already mentioned, the fear of co-optation was on the minds of the opposition. Yet, the fact this fear did not, in the final analysis, deter the majority from participating, may, from the regime's view, be regarded as a step forward in terms of achieving this aim.

In situations whereby a political system is not simply structured along authoritarian lines, but also within the framework of personal rule, non-competitive multi-party elections can also be viewed as an important mechanism of clientelist co-optation and control. The nature of clientelist control however, differs by virtue of the ruler's personal monopoly of patronage. For example, whilst one particular party may dominate the electoral arena, such a party cannot be compared to the dominant party in Mexico for example, or until very recently, India where the Congress Party controlled: "not only the state and national governments, but most of the local governments and new quasi-governmental bodies... [with the outcome being that] the Party has been able to establish extensive control over patronage."⁹⁴ Instead, it is the individual ruler who maintains ultimate control over state resources. The dominant party in other words, is simply provided, courtesy of the ruler, with access to, not control over, state resources.

⁹⁴ M. Weiner, 1964, P21, cited in A. Weingrod, (1977), PP326-7.

Personal rule, after all, functions with minimum coercion only if political institutions and groupings are weak, dependent upon the ruler and thus easier for him to control. In such a context, if a dominant party does exist (and unless the ruler maintains a single party system or can manage the precarious task of placing himself as an arbiter of all parties, then a dominant party of which he is head, is likely to exist), it is in the interest of the ruler to ensure such a party (or indeed, any of the participating 'opposition' parties) does not emerge as a strong political entity that could potentially challenge his personal consolidation of power.

The role of elections as a mechanism of co-option and clientelist control in such a context, can perhaps be better understood along more traditional, and thus more personalistic lines. What this means is that because it is the ruler who maintains ultimate control over patronage, a political party cannot be regarded as an institutionalised, independent political entity. Instead, it is more likely to be made up of a conglomerate of personalities each possessing their own personal network of supporters. The traditionally personalistic ties on which political parties in the Philippines were based, and the way it affected the nature of elections, is typical of that found in personal authoritarian systems of rule. As Landé explains:

"Formally, each party [in the Philippines] is an association composed of those who have become party members. In practice each party, at any point in time, is a multi-tiered pyramid of personal followings, one heaped upon the other... If one wishes to discover the real framework upon which election campaigns are built, one must turn away from political parties and focus one's attention upon individual candidates and the vertical chains of leadership and followership into which they arrange themselves at any given point in time."⁹⁵

⁹⁵ C. H. Landé (1977), P86.

The personalistic nature of these ties, and the fact these ties were structures independent of political parties meant that electoral victory was predominantly for those: "with the greatest personal wealth, ... the most flamboyant campaign styles, and ... those who are thought most likely to be able to win and thus have access to patronage and other rewards of office."⁹⁶ More importantly, one of the main consequences of this electoral system was that it led to a: "preoccupation with personalities, offices and spoils, and that lack of interest in policy or ideology, which is so strikingly characteristic of Philippine politics."⁹⁷

This preoccupation by party members and their personal followers with patronage and spoils, put simply, left political parties- as unified organisations, in a weak position. In fact, because such electoral dynamics affected the nature of party organisation, the two major parties were, in the final analysis: "poor instruments for the formulation of distinctive and consistent programmes."⁹⁸ This, in turn, left each new President who took office with the: "freedom to create his own program."⁹⁹ A program which was predominantly: "guided by his personal views, the views of his advisers, and by a variety of pressures... which no President can ignore."¹⁰⁰

On the basis of such individualistic methods of political participation, one can understand why it was not too difficult for President Marcos (1965-1986) to establish himself in office for over two decades. The fact that electoral contest focused upon personality-directed patronage as opposed to party policies or even party-directed patronage, meant that political parties remained

⁹⁶ C. H. Landé (1977), PP86-7.

⁹⁷ C. H. Landé (1977), P88.

⁹⁸ C. H. Landé (1977), P87.

⁹⁹ C. H. Landé (1977), P87.

¹⁰⁰ C. H. Landé (1977), PP87-8.

disorganised, disunited and thus weak political entities. Therefore, when Marcos decided in 1972, one year before the end of his second term as President, to impose a state of emergency and suspend elections, it was virtually impossible for any of the political parties to effectively oppose him.¹⁰¹

The dynamics of elections based on personality-directed state patronage, one can thus argue, encouraged, or at least contributed towards the emergence of personal authoritarian rule in the Philippines during the Marcos era. In general however, such elections do not necessarily contribute towards the emergence, but rather help in the preservation of, personal authoritarian rule. This one can argue, is because with patronage ultimately under the personal control of the ruler, and with ruler usually installing himself as head of the 'ruling' party, such elections not only as a mechanism of distributing to the masses tangible and other forms of rewards in return for regime-directed political support. But more importantly perhaps, an electoral arena of this nature also acts as a mechanism through which the dependency of political actors on the ruler is maintained and reaffirmed.

In traditional society, the expansion of the government's clientelist apparatus into society, as mentioned previously, facilitated the recruitment of traditional patrons such as large landowners, into the state apparatus. This, in turn, enabled the power-holders to redefine their roles, so that: "instead of being largely creatures of the locality who dealt with the centre, (the patrons) became increasingly creatures of the centre who dealt with the

¹⁰¹ In fact, had it not been for the combined efforts of the Church and the Media in mobilising the masses following the 'non-competitive' elections of 1985 and the subsequent defection of two of the President's most senior men, it is possible the President could have remained in office for the remainder of his life. To prevent a recurrence of personal rule, the current Philippine constitution, similar to the Mexican system, now limits the presidential tenure to a one, non-re-electable, six-year term. Telephone interview/conversation with the Head of the Office of HE the Philippine Ambassador to London. 8 January 1998.

local community."¹⁰² Such type of clientelist recruitment one can argue, is most prominently reflected in an electoral arena where the manipulation of state resources to provide facilities such as piped water supplies, paved roads or a new school in return for supporting the "right" candidate (i.e. a government nominated candidate), can be very enticing to an impoverished public - and more so in an arena where opinion based voting is of little significance to electoral outcome. In such a context, the utility calculations of individual voters in a single party, multi-candidate system will also prevail in a non-competitive multi-party system:

"Under a competitive party system, it makes sense for citizens to pay attention to a candidate's stand on those issues affecting the entire national political system. For if a candidate is committed to a party, then [their party's] success could conceivably affect national policy; [the candidate's] performance at the polls could combine with the performance of other candidates from [the same] party and their joint performance would help to define which team would subsequently control government...[under a single-party, multiple candidate system] if successful, a candidate ...would...have little impact upon national policies. In the absence of a competitive party system, voters, behaving rationally...therefore tend to pay more attention to the ability of candidates to do things of immediate, local value than to their stands on national issues."¹⁰³

In this respect, it is logical to view the clientelist control of the vote as a mechanism of social control derived from the satisfaction of tangible demands in return for political support. In fact, elections in such a context function as "little more than devices through which clienteles are given the opportunity to register their

¹⁰² Scott and Kerkvliet, 1977, P454; cited in R. Lemarchand (1981), P18.

¹⁰³ R. Bates (1989), P92.

loyalty to competing patrons through the vote."¹⁰⁴ As Lemarchand and Legg note:

"Without in any way denying the selectivity with which...members of parliament act out their roles...their relationships with their... constituents are essentially based on personalised, affective, reciprocal ties. The deputy-constituent relationship in this case is but an extension into the modern parliamentary arena of the patron-client relationships discernible at the local or regional level."¹⁰⁵

The point however, is that because it is the ruler, not the individual patrons, or the party of which they are members, which controls most of the patronage, it is thus difficult for them to become independent of the ruler himself. The ruler's control of state resources in such a context contributes towards ensuring individual "patrons"/politicians cannot compete against, but in compliance to the prevailing regime if they are to satisfy the demands of potential "clients"/constituents. Furthermore, as political clientelism radiates from a single point in the political process -i.e. the ruler- the dependency of potential "patrons" is confined to one patronage base at the apex of the system.¹⁰⁶ What this means is that an individual entering the electoral contest with aspirations to become a "patron" is more inclined to seek the patronage of the ruler through high-ranking political connections, or through membership of the party which he heads. And in doing so, he must thus comply with the ruler's definition of 'rules of the game'.

The same method of political control can theoretically be extended to opposition party members. Their success in the electoral arena also depends upon the support of potential 'clients/voters' within society, which in turn, is predominantly obtained in exchange for tangible benefits.

¹⁰⁴ R. Lemarchand and K. Legg (1978), PP138-139.

¹⁰⁵ R. Lemarchand and K. Legg (1978), P126.

¹⁰⁶ R. Lemarchand and K. Legg (1978), P138.

As voters come to expect benefits which can realistically only be channelled from the centre, members of the opposition, like members of the state supported party, may not have much choice but to depend upon the power-holder if some gains are to be made in the electoral arena.

In such a context, if members of the opposition decide to accept the patronage of the ruler for the sake of electoral gains, the result would arguably be advantageous (to the ruler) from a number of angles. The first and most logical being that these opposition groups would be compelled to accept, at least formally, the existing political status-quo. More importantly however, is the increasing possibility these opposition groups would become further weakened. What is meant here is that if the ruler's control of patronage ensures his own 'ruling' party is little more than a conglomerate of personalities each possessing their personal network of followers, then it is likely opposition groups, through participation in this regime-defined arena of political contest, would eventually function on a similar, and thus easily controllable basis.

Thus by granting opposition parties permission to participate in an electoral arena whereby competition is not realistically between parties, but between rival contestants whose campaigns focus predominantly upon claimed and demonstrated potential for serving the interests of voters and channelling state resources into the community, it is conceivable that members of the opposition might become inclined to focus more upon being representative of a constituency, and less upon being representative of a party point of view. In doing so, their role as intermediaries between those on the periphery and the centre would logically be enhanced. This, in turn, makes it more probable that party unity would weaken as each member of the opposition- like members of the ruler's 'dominant' party- would be more concerned about preserving and expanding their own personal base of support, than upon participating in party politics that could potentially

threaten such a base of support. In such a context, the ruler's position as ultimate patron would theoretically be enhanced and expanded, whilst the development of organised institutions and groupings becomes further hindered, thus reducing the possibility of effective challenges to the system of personal rule. This, we will argue, is the main function of non-competitive multi-party elections in contemporary Egypt.

The case of contemporary Egypt

The role of non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt as a mechanism of clientelist co-option and control can perhaps be better understood in the context of political activity in Egypt. The nature of political activity in Egypt, as Springborg notes, is not even based upon formal political groupings. In fact, he maintains that political activity in Egypt cannot be examined by relying on organised groups as key units of analysis simply because such groups are not that important in Egypt. He goes on to suggest that: "groups may not be indispensable to the [Egyptian] political process".¹⁰⁷ Quoting C.H. Moore, he points out that "Egyptians do not act politically primarily through organised groups" because the transformations that occurred post-1952 were not radical enough to discard certain deeply embedded traditions within society.¹⁰⁸

Such traditions which have been rooted in Egyptian society over the last few centuries include the "individualistic orientation toward economic activity" which has "hindered the formation of a "unified and egalitarian working class"."¹⁰⁹ The traditions of the predominantly peasant community are considered another factor which has contributed towards the weakness of categorical ties. As one writer discussing the political activities of Egyptian

¹⁰⁷ R. Springborg (1975), P83.

¹⁰⁸ C.H. Moore, September, 1972, P18, cited in R. Springborg, (1975), P83.

¹⁰⁹ R. Springborg (1975), P84.

peasants prior to 1952 observes "the most striking feature of [peasant] communal action is its lack of formal organisation or planning."¹¹⁰ Communal action in Egypt, as the author elaborates, "required no formal planning, organisation, or mobilisation to occur. In a dispute with landlord or an official, a peasant could often rely on the active support of relatives."¹¹¹ The peasant in dispute not only depended upon and received the support of close relatives "but also of scores, even hundreds of relatives (close and remote), friends and associates".¹¹² As a result, the "[t]ies of family and friendship...formed the basis of community as often as did common village residence."¹¹³ Whilst the culprit "who gave cause for complaint was viewed as an oppressor but not as a class enemy."¹¹⁴

Islam is also considered as an important factor which may have contributed to the predominance of political individualism in Egypt. This, it is argued is because "Islam, unlike Christianity, was never effectively institutionalised. Islam had never provided a counterbalance to arbitrary rulers nor checked their ambitions by imposing a clearly delineated, theoretical guideline to circumscribe the exercise of secular power."¹¹⁵ Rather, the *ʿulama* of Islam were divided into cliques which centred around charismatic teachers and jurors. By offering the clique leaders administrative posts and other forms of patronage, the rulers were in a position to co-opt and control them. The consequence, as one author puts it, resulted in "the entire religious structure [being] dependent upon the favours of the ruling elite."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ N. J. Brown (1990), P111.

¹¹¹ N.J. Brown (1990), P111.

¹¹² N.J. Brown (1990), P112.

¹¹³ N.J. Brown (1990), P112.

¹¹⁴ N.J. Brown (1990), P80.

¹¹⁵ R. Springborg (1975), P85.

¹¹⁶ D. Crecelius (1972), P171.

In the final analysis, it is because developed organised groupings remain absent that: "Egypt's rulers continue to exercise the prerogatives of leadership unfettered by the constraints of organised constituencies."¹¹⁷ This, for example, is evident by the fact that since 1952 all political activity including the policy making process remains under the exclusive control of the President. While in modern democratic systems, the head of the executive branch also dominates control over the decision making process, in Egypt, the President is not institutionally bound to formal political organisations who share in the setting of policy. That is, characteristic of authoritarian regimes, the legislative branch of government has little role in exercising political pressure or restraint on the policy decisions of the President.

This is primarily due to the fact that while the legislature is provided with formal control over the executive in the form of constitutional authority to license or dissolve government, in reality this power is rendered futile by virtue of the President's constitutional right to overrule the Assembly's vote through a public referendum. Other factors including executive patterns of appointment, the President's prerogative to enforce emergency laws and most important, the President's position as head and patron of the ruling party further reinforce his individual control over the decision-making process. Accordingly, multi-party elections under Mubarak are characterised by the fact that their outcome has consistently remained predetermined in favour of the President's National Democratic Party. With this in mind, it is understandable to suggest that:

"Mubarak's assessment of the politically active secular and semi-secular middle and upper classes is that they do not pose a significant threat to him. He can afford to indulge them by granting rights of expression in the form of newspapers, political parties, elections and so on, for

¹¹⁷ R. Springborg (1975), p86.

not only are their demands limited, but the expression of them is almost as important as their fulfilment. For [this] small price...he obtains their consent to his rule and their support in his campaign to isolate radical extremists"¹¹⁸

Yet as these "middle" classes do not themselves control major levers of coercion or accumulation nor do they even enjoy a broad social base of support in society, it is difficult to understand why Mubarak would need their support or even consent to his rule. In fact, one can argue that granting formal participatory space to this group can permit them to expand their social base of support and politicise the masses against the regime more effectively than extremist groups.

This is why it would seem more logical to view the extension of political activity to include the participation of "opposition" elements in the political arena as efforts to recruit them into the government's clientelist apparatus so as to inhibit and contain their development so that they do not become potential threats to the regime. Multi-party elections can best illustrate the mechanisms by which the regime reaffirms its political domination on the basis of clientelist control. With the President at the apex of this clientelist structure and the state resources at his disposal, he is in a prime position to co-opt non-extremist opposition leaders into the existing political system not only by granting them the right to form parties, establish newspapers and participate in elections, but also by occasionally assisting them during electoral competition, and in most cases providing them with some access to state resources. This latter point is of extreme significance for both the government and the opposition. The opposition is aware that in order to obtain electoral gains they must be capable of channelling state resources into constituencies. The government, also aware of this dependency readily manipulates the situation to

¹¹⁸ R. Springborg (1988), P159.

ensure their compliance in the same manner it controls members of its own party.

Through the use of clientelist control of the vote, it is difficult to create a relationship between voters and parties on the basis of programmatic or ideological conviction as voters are more concerned with the tangible benefits they can acquire in return for their votes. Electoral competition is subsequently structured on a highly parochial basis with political campaigns between rival contestants concentrated on claimed and demonstrated potential for serving the interest of voters and promoting the development of the local community. Consequently, the majority of individual contestants attempt to seek membership of the National Democratic Party, since, as the ruling party, it is in a position to provide its members with direct access to the state resources required to deliver the goods and services necessary for the continued electoral support of their constituency. Such attraction to the President's party has, as a result, contributed towards a weak, highly decentralised party dominated by intense intra-party competition from individual activists promoting their own personal careers.

However, from the government's perspective, this situation appears ideal for not only is it easier to maintain and control a conglomerate of personalities which constitute the dominant party, but the situation also highlights and strengthens a clientelist set of linkages which starts from the President and passes through the party and the representative before eventually reaching the constituency. In short, this process not only reinforces the dependence of activists on the government and its party for their personal political careers, but also illustrates to the voters their own dependence on the state.

The same argument can be more or less applied to Assembly members representing opposition parties. While opposition parties depend upon cordial relations with the government

in order to simply function, electoral competition appears to further reinforce such dependence. The government's clientelist control of the vote ensures that representatives from opposition parties are regarded by the majority of voters as intermediaries between themselves and central government, rather than as representatives of a party point of view. Subsequently government opponents are elected on the same principles of personal networks and services to the community which define the role of NDP representatives. In other words, voters very rarely support an opposition representative because of his ideological persuasion. Instead, it is usually because they believe that once the individual in question enters the People's Assembly, he will be in a position to influence the government into channelling some form of resources in their direction. In this respect, opposition-government relations are of great significance for it can determine the amount of state resources that will be diverted into respective constituencies and subsequently decide the electoral prospects of individual opponents and their party in future elections.

The extent to which 'multi-party' elections in Mubarak's Egypt, performs such a role, will be discussed in detail as we examine, in the following chapters, how the fidelity reward exchange which this electoral arena has created, permits the President to establish a four-tier clientelist structure (consisting of the President, political parties, political activists and the masses) which links those on the periphery to the centre of power and subsequently contributes towards their containment and control.

1.3 Methods of Research

The study of controlled multi-party elections as one method of understanding a political system and its actors appears at first to have more limitations than it does advantages. First, there is very little detailed empirical research focused on such elections not only in comparison to democratic elections, but also in comparison to the

attention devoted to single party systems. Instead broad trends and empirical generalisation rather than detailed systematic analysis constitutes what is available in this field of study.¹¹⁹ Examining the significance of multi-party elections within an authoritarian regime continues to remain a neglected field of research even with the collapse of many single party systems in the 1980's and 1990's. The new in-depth studies which have appeared on the scene such as the extensive four volume Transitions from Authoritarian Rule¹²⁰ have tended to devote minimal attention to the electoral functions of 'transiting' authoritarian regimes. Instead, studies on this topic are inclined to focus on factors such as historical or international parameters which directly contribute to, or hinder such transitions. This subsequently provides us with a rich variety of concepts and constructs in relation to successful and unsuccessful democratic transitions, but very little on the functions performed by "controlled" multi-party electoral systems.

The limited availability of in-depth literature on this subject can be partly the result of academic indifference to processes which do not appear to have any visible impact within a political arena, and partly due to the fact that researchers appear to overlook the "weak" opposition and prefer to focus on the overall dynamics of the dominant party rather than the electoral dynamics of the whole system. A detailed examination of controlled multi-party elections not only should provide us with an understanding of the electoral dynamics and activities of the dominant party but should also highlight some aspects of the motives and mechanisms of the governments which hold them. Furthermore, non-competitive multi-party elections are not, even with their foregone conclusions, one party elections.

¹¹⁹ The authors of Elections Without Choice have set out some principal guidelines in this direction. The book however, is limited by the fact that it is rather dated and does not enter into very much detail with regard to non-competitive multi-party systems.

¹²⁰ G. O'Donnell, P.C. Schmitter and L. Whitehead (1991).

Therefore in order to properly understand their role in a state, it is necessary to examine individuals and organisations who do not represent the government and question the relationship which exists between them and the authorities. It is only by assessing elections on this basis, that one can construct a better understanding of the mechanisms and complexities which exist behind the simplistic appearance of predetermined electoral results.

The limited data on this subject can perhaps also be attributed to other factors directly related to the political systems in which they operate. As we have mentioned in our theoretical framework, multi-party elections in personal authoritarian regimes are not institutionalised in the sense that power-holders are primarily dependent on changing the "rules of the game" when it suits them, as well as resorting to a variety of manipulative and informal techniques to help them maintain their dominant position in the political arena. Hence, controlled multi-party elections are less coherent than the procedurally standardised democratic or even mobilising single party systems. From this viewpoint, the study of controlled multi-party elections does not only appear discouraging from a theoretical perspective, but also from the practical side. How does one construct a systematic framework of analysis when organisations in such systems are not in a position to develop regularised patterns and routines? More importantly, because information does not always travel a consistent route, how can one obtain data (either from government or opposition sources) which is not suppressed or distorted? Furthermore, how can one interpret information obtained from informal and sometimes random routes? In short, the lack of enthusiasm on the part of researchers with regard to this ambiguous topic is understandable as it is not always easy to obtain or accumulate methodical data in such systems.

In view of these problems and due to the fact that we maintained an inductive rather than a deductive approach to

our hypothesis, it became necessary during the course of analysis to apply a mixture of research methods. The research methods we adopted consisted of printed data, extended interviews, informal interviews and non participant observation, which we tailored around the three broad questions that constituted the foundation of our enquiry: (i) the government's purpose in holding elections; (ii) the reasons political activists participate in elections; and (iii) the role of the public within the electoral arena.

Accumulating printed data was naturally a continuous process throughout the research period. Extended interviews, informal interviews and non-participant observation were carried out in Egypt in two stages. The first stage was carried out for three months between October 1994 to January 1995, whilst the second stage was carried out during the same period the following year. In order gain access to research sources during our visits, we relied upon personal networks and recommendations. On our arrival in Egypt, we first contacted some individuals who were recommended to us by our academic supervisor Dr Charles Tripp. As a result of our connection to Dr Tripp, we were able to secure our first interview with a senior political analyst at his newspaper headquarters, within the first couple of days of our arrival. After a two hour interview he recommended that we meet one of his colleagues, whom he promptly telephoned and fixed an appointment for us to see that same day.

During our meeting with this colleague, we mentioned that we were particularly interested in interviewing active politicians. He admitted that he was not personally acquainted with these people but he knew someone who was and could arrange for us to meet him. This other person as it turned out had extensive connections within the political arena and very kindly arranged a number of appointments for us with various political activists. Once our interviews started to gain momentum, we found that the

best method to obtain new sources was to approach interviewees/contacts and ask them for personal recommendations and guidance. We subsequently established and expanded our networks in this manner. It was necessary to collect data using such informal techniques because as a result of our general familiarity with Egyptian society, we were aware that if we turned up unannounced and unknown with the intention of obtaining access to any form of information whether from an individual or an organisation, it would most likely be met with non-co-operation and perhaps even with suspicion. A more detailed account of our research methods is as follows:

Printed Material

We accumulated printed material from a variety of sources including foreign (mainly British, and occasionally American) press, periodicals, NGO reports and the Egyptian state service information releases. Periodicals such as the Middle East Contemporary Survey were initially useful for deriving summarised annual reports on the political situation in Egypt. Access to various press reports dedicated to domestic politics in Egypt since 1981 were obtained predominantly from the London Business Library, and occasionally from the collection in the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Other articles and press reports were obtained from more random locations including the American University in Cairo Library. Political rights reports from foreign non governmental organisations (i.e. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch Middle East etc.) and Egyptian NGOs (i.e. Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid, Independent Commission for Electoral Review etc.) were also examined in libraries but usually acquired directly from the actual organisations in question. The Egyptian State Information Service provided official government texts for legislation, the constitution and various Presidential speeches. We also paid particular attention to the available literature provided by both government and opposition sources in Egypt. However, during the course of research, experience revealed to us that data in the form

of newspaper articles, party programmes and various other forms of literature produced by both sides were insufficient for an analysis of the Egyptian electoral process.¹²¹

The problem with relying on printed data of this nature is that it was generally rather distorted and incomplete. Printed matter produced by parties such as their respective programmes and ideologies were vague and mostly in the form of pamphlets and booklets. Opposition and government newspapers¹²² were undeniably useful for assessing and comparing respective political viewpoints and concerns with regard to campaigns and other activities during elections.¹²³ However, most newspaper reports were impaired by a certain degree of bias and exaggeration that could put the most 'popular' tabloid newspapers in Britain to shame.¹²⁴ While the collection and study of this data extended for a period of over four years, by virtue of its generality it could do no more than set the scene and provide occasional reference points for the research argument.

Interviews and non-participant observation: Egypt 1994/5

Extended interviews: These interviews were initially aimed at political activists¹²⁵ and were intended to serve two

¹²¹ Political programmes, election propaganda and similar material of the NDP, Labour Party, Neo-Wafd Party, Liberal Party, Nasserite Party, NPUP (Tajammu') and the Muslim Brotherhood were obtained personally from individual members of each organisation respectively.

¹²² Al-Ahram newspaper archives allowed us to view its collection of government and opposition newspapers dedicated to legislative elections under Mubarak. A similar collection was personally accumulated for the 1995 elections.

¹²³ As long as the electoral concerns of activists did not question the legitimacy of the state or reflect negatively on the President in person, then politicians were more or less free to publish these concerns in their respective newspapers.

¹²⁴ We are referring here to newspapers owned and run by political parties. The semi-autonomous state run Al-Ahram and its sister paper Al-Ahram Weekly were less sensationalist.

¹²⁵ Those most relevant to our research include: Dr Hamdi Al-Sayyed (member of People's Assembly, NDP and Head of the Egyptian Medical

purposes, first, to formulate a framework of what was actually going on in the electoral arena based on their personal knowledge and experience. The second was to elicit information about the character and personal political convictions of these individuals. Each extended interview took between one and a half and two and a half hours and two sets of questions were raised during that time. The first set of questions were personally oriented and required fixed answers. These questions included the subjects' professional background, local origin, the number of years active in politics and so forth. After the initial set of questions, the interview was then directed with more open ended questions around issues such as personal views on the political system, the reasons for their (or their party's) participation in electoral politics, examples of the problems encountered, examples of success achieved, political beliefs and political aims in past, present and future context. Such questions allowed the respondents the freedom to express their opinions in a less constricted manner, to recount personal or general experience and give as much detail as possible in order to clarify or qualify their answers.

The respondents were much more gracious and open than we had expected, and provided us with a wealth of information which helped us construct a clearer idea of the Egyptian electoral arena and the actors in it. In fact the problem we encountered was not that they were too cautious, but

Association), Dr Hamdi Faysal (member of People's Assembly, NDP) Dr 'Esam Al-'Eryan (senior Muslim Brotherhood leader, former secretary-general of the Egyptian Medical Association and former Assembly member), Dhiya' Al-Din Dawud (chairman of Nasserite Party and Assembly member), Hamed Mahmud (deputy chairman, Nasserite Party), Majdi Ahmad Husayn (former Assembly member, senior member of the Labour Party and editor of Al-Sha'b), 'Ali Salama (deputy-secretary general of the Neo-Wafd Party), Mona Makram 'Obayd (ex-Neo-Wafd member and Presidential appointee to the Assembly, 1990-1995), Lotfi Waked (deputy chairman, Tajammu' party), Dr Rif'at Sa'id (secretary general, Tajammu' party and Presidential appointee to the Shura Council, 1995-), 'Abdel Al-Ghaffar Shokr (deputy secretary general, Tajammu' party) Al-Badri Farghali (member of Assembly, Tajammu' party), Fikri Al-Jazzar (Independent Assembly member (1990-1995), also incumbent deputy during Nasser and Sadat eras).

that most of them appeared too enthusiastic in promoting themselves (i.e. "people would vote for me regardless of what party I represented"), or their party (i.e. "the whole nation supports us, but we don't win many seats in elections because the government falsifies the results"). NDP members appeared more indifferent to the situation (i.e. "I would only join a government supported party").

During the course of this part of the research it became apparent that the majority of respondents (especially from the opposition) were somewhat biased with regard to a few of the open ended questions directed at their limited position in the electoral arena. Members of the government supported National Democratic Party, were somewhat more cautious in their response, but provided surprisingly straightforward responses by comparison to their opposition counterparts. Especially with regard to enquiries such as why they joined the government side or why the government party has such extensive monopoly within the electoral arena (i.e. "the NDP is in a privileged position because it is headed by the President"). Perhaps the opposition activists believed that being interviewed by a student from the University of London would provide them with the same publicity abroad as being interviewed by a news correspondent from London. In any case, within completing the first few extended interviews with the political activists, it became necessary to find supplementary research sources to help us overcome some of the inadequate responses we obtained from the activists and to corroborate the adequate ones. The research avenues we subsequently pursued in parallel with the extended interviews with the politicians consisted of extended interviews with certain political specialists; and more informal interviews and interaction with the politicians previously encountered.

The political specialists we interviewed were selected on the basis of their knowledge of aspects within the political arena in Egypt relevant to this study. These

specialists comprised mostly academics, retired politicians, newspaper editors, political analysts, researchers and journalists.¹²⁶ The questions addressed to the specialists were broadly centred around the three main research questions in the study and each interview in general, lasted between one and a half to two and a half hours. The open-ended questions were again designed to allow the interviewee flexibility and greater freedom to discuss what they personally considered to be important issues within the Egyptian electoral arena. Moreover, in order to corroborate certain data, specific questions were usually addressed concerning some answers obtained from the political activists we had previously interviewed. For example, if individual "A" from party "Z" had mentioned to us that his failure in a certain election was a result of government malpractice, it was useful to ask as many specialists as possible their views concerning government malpractice, their opinion on party "Z" and why they think certain people such as "A" do not do very well in elections.

The in-depth knowledge of the specialists was on the whole, very useful in providing a much more detached and analytical insight of the electoral arena in Egypt and

¹²⁶ The most relevant of those who were interviewed in this category include: Dr Mostafa Kamel Al-Sayyed (Cairo University), Dr Salwa Sha'rawi Jom'a (American University in Cairo), Dr Mostafa Al-Fiqi (Director of Diplomatic Institute), Dr Sa'd Al-Din Ibrahim (Director of Ibn Khaldoun Research Centre), Dr 'Ali Al-Din Helal Desuqi, (Dean of Political Science and Economics College, Cairo University), Dr 'Abd Al-Mon'im Sayyed 'Ali (Director of Centre of Strategic Studies, Al Ahram), 'Amr Hashem (researcher on Egyptian parliamentary affairs, Centre of Strategic studies, Al Ahram), Dr 'Osama Ghazali Harb (Editor of Al-Siyasa Al-Dawliyya, Al Ahram), Dr Wahid 'Abd Al-Majid, (editor of Al Hayat - Cairo branch, and editor of Al Ahram's Centre of Strategic Studies Annual Report) Dr Hala Mostafa (senior researcher and specialist on Islamic movements in Egypt, Al Ahram's Center of Strategic Studies) Muhammad Sid 'Ahmed (senior political analyst, Al-Ahram), Fahmi Howaydi (Islamic writer and senior political analyst, Al-Ahram) No'man Al-Zayyati (political and economic journalist, Al-Ahram 'Iqtisadi), Tahsin Bashir (retired ambassador and senior political analyst), Dr Muhammad 'Asfur (political analyst and ex-senior Neo-Wafd member) and General Muhammad Fawzi (minister of defence, 1968-71).

those who participate in it. But by virtue of their position as experts in the field rather than actors, the data accumulated from them was primarily a supplement to compensate the inadequate literature available on the subject, and to clarify and corroborate the extended interviews derived from the political actors themselves. Also as this group was not the focus of our investigation, it was not necessary to maintain continuous interaction with them, although we found it useful to remain in contact with a few key individuals for the purpose of general guidance and to benefit from their personal connections within both the specialist and political field.

Informal Interviews: These interviews were conducted with the political activists who had already participated in extended interviews. This method of research was a more gradual process, but was certainly an indispensable method for cross-examination and for getting to understand the mentality behind the action - or inaction of political participants. The familiarity process prior to and during the informal interviews enabled the subjects to be more relaxed and open in their responses, as opposed to some of the "formal publicity" responses previously encountered. It also allowed us to approach the individuals in question with new enquiries and for further elaboration or background on issues previously discussed. As a result of informal interviews, we were also in a position to obtain in-depth information on their less known activities and relationships with various individuals and groups outside their own particular realm. Due to our continuous interaction and informal "chats" with these activists, we were able to construct a clearer idea of the Egyptian political arena and differentiated between the formal side of electoral activities (such as party programmes, newspaper reports, and the "official" position of participants) and the reality (political individualism, personal connections, clientelist networks and so forth).

Opposition leaders for example, were not necessarily isolated individuals fighting an overwhelming cause in their attempt to gain entry into the political arena. As we discovered, many were already part of the existing system. Personal networks with each other and with those in power appeared to be a much stronger than the image of "oppressed" opposition one would usually associate with systems of this nature. Informal interviews however, also provided us with the opportunity to examine and understand the negative side of political individualism. Through interviewing political activists on a less formal basis, they were more open about their own fears and shortcomings, as well as the "behind the scenes" problems encountered with each other and with the authorities.

We also used informal interviews to assess politicians' opinion of each other and to corroborate each others responses. The corroboration technique applied was the same as that used with the political specialists. The responses with regard to their opinion of other political activists were on the whole more personal than the responses obtained from the specialists. With regard to their assessment of organisations other than their own, however, their responses were largely compatible with the responses derived from the specialists. We found informal interviews to be a very productive method for accumulating research material and we did not encounter major obstacles with this research method.

Informal interviews were however, a much more spontaneous process than extended interviews. This was because informal interviews took place whenever the opportunity arose, rather than with pre-planned schedules and "defined" time allocation. In other words, we would usually pass by the office of an individual on the way to or from another interview, or whilst attempting to obtain some literature. We would thank the individual for their help on the previous occasion and generally update them on our progress. This procedure induced familiarity and allowed

informal interviews to advance. On some occasions an interview extended for over an hour, on other occasions it would just last 10 or 15 minutes. That was why continuous interaction was very important and was sometimes supplemented by telephone conversations.

While we found interviews of this nature to be a very productive mechanism for acquiring interesting and new data for our research, it must be pointed out that such data was primarily dependent upon the co-operation of the politicians in question. Furthermore, their co-operation with researchers on a more personal level is dependent upon a number of factors including the general political atmosphere during the period of research;¹²⁷ their own political predicament during the time of research;¹²⁸ and sometimes politicians may even take into account personal factors such as a researcher's nationality or religion before formal barriers are relaxed.¹²⁹ The limitations therefore of adopting this research method lies primarily in the fact that the results obtained are dependent upon a number of circumstances which can be sometimes difficult to reproduce.

Non-Participant Observation: During our 1994-5 stay in Egypt, applying the research technique of non-participant observation was rather limited. We spent a number of days

¹²⁷ While the political atmosphere during our time of research was generally relaxed, one must put into consideration the fact that the political atmosphere in systems of this nature can be somewhat unpredictable. For example shortly before our departure from Egypt in January 1996, the official Muslim Brotherhood building in central Cairo, a site which was useful for maintaining regular contact with certain individuals was abruptly shut down during a government crackdown on Islamist activity.

¹²⁸ For example, one prominent politician we continuously encountered in 1994/5 was preoccupied with court trials during our return visit in 1995/6 and while he invited us to his home during our second fieldtrip to Egypt, he was clearly very distracted by the circumstances. On the other hand, another prominent politician who was preoccupied with a court trial during the 1994/5 period, was much more relaxed and was able to give us a lot of his time during our 1995/6 visit.

¹²⁹ During the course of research we were continuously asked questions of this nature.

at the People's Assembly as the visiting guest of one politician. During that time he introduced us to some of his associates. While this provided us with the opportunity to interview some politicians and establish new contact with others, more importantly it allowed us to observe and record Assembly members' interaction with each other and with their (constituency) visitors. On another occasion, we visited a member of parliament at his party's local office in a Cairo suburb to observe him receiving his constituents. On that day it was possible to question constituents waiting to see the politician, record constituent-representative interaction, the reasons those constituents visited their parliamentary representative and the manner in which the representative dealt with the issues confronting him. While we did not devote too much time to non-participant observation during this stage of research, these few days were useful in providing us with a working insight of the preoccupation of constituents, the role they assign their representative and the type of relationship which exists between them. Although we had already constructed a framework of what these issues involved as a result of our previous research methods, the days devoted to non-participant observation basically helped to clarify and confirm a few of the points from the data we had already accumulated.

Non-participant observation and interviews: Egypt 1995/6

As opposed to the first part of our fieldwork, we applied non participant observation extensively during our second trip to Egypt. The main objective in returning to Egypt was to be present for the 1995 legislative elections in order to observe electoral activity and campaigning first hand. Non-participant observation during this stage was primarily to ascertain the validity of the primary data accumulated through the previous year's interviews. It was important to engage in non-participant observation so that a practical analysis of the behaviour, interactions and relationship of the electoral actors at various levels of the system could

be checked and compared with the data obtained from in-depth and informal interviews.

Electoral activity was for security reasons authorised for a period of one month before election day (29 November), and the second round of elections for the constituencies where none of the contestants passed the 51% mark was scheduled for 15 December. This short period of time meant that preparation and organisation for the research needed to be completed before the start of the electoral period. This was made possible with the assistance of several contacts whom we had interviewed during the 1994/5 period. These individuals assisted us in our search for relevant "sources" and arranged appointments once we had decided whom we wanted to observe. As a result of their assistance we were in a position to embark on research from the start of the campaigning period.

We divided non-participant observation into two parts. The first part was devoted to analysing the role of political actors within the electoral arena; whilst the second part focused on examining the role of the voters. While both parts invariably overlapped, we found it more useful to focus our attention on one group at a time and to examine its relationship with the other groups in the electoral arena. Extended and informal interviews were also applied to supplement some of the equivocal aspects of non-participant observation research. The aim was to eventually compare and link the patterns which emerged from the data accumulated from both group perspectives.

Non-Participant Observation: (Contestants)

As mentioned above, the contestants were selected with the help of individuals who had been interviewed and befriended during the first stage of fieldwork. The main priority was to find one or two contestants who represented one of the following categories: (i) independent (ii) the NDP (iii) the Muslim Brotherhood (iv) the Labour party (v) the Neo-Wafd (vi) the NPUP (Tajammu') (vii) the Liberal party. We

wanted to examine their campaign programmes, assess voter response to their campaigns, and examine their relationship with their parties, with other competitors and with the authorities during the electoral period. For practical reasons, the contestants we selected were not based in constituencies further than 150 kilometres from Cairo since the short period authorised for the electoral campaign meant that it was crucial to economise on the time spent travelling to and from a contestant's constituency. Furthermore candidates rather than constituencies were selected as research samples because the NDP was the sole party represented in all electoral constituencies. We also took into consideration the fact that it will be the attributes of candidates in a constituency, rather than the constituency's social characteristics which is primarily responsible for the electoral outcome. The number of contestants recommended were narrowed down to the following group:

Candidate	Political affiliation	Constituency	Type
<u>M</u> ostafa <u>B</u> akri	Liberal	<u>H</u> elwan	Industrial
<u>M</u> uhammad ' <u>A</u> kif	Muslim Brotherhood	<u>H</u> adaiyiq <u>A</u> l-Qobba	Urban W.C.
' <u>A</u> del <u>H</u> usayn	Labour	<u>M</u> adinat <u>N</u> agr	Urban M.C.
<u>M</u> uhammad <u>A</u> l-Sayyed	NDP	<u>H</u> adaiyiq <u>A</u> l-Qobba	Urban W.C.
<u>K</u> haled <u>M</u> ohyi <u>A</u> l-D <u>i</u> n	NPUP	<u>K</u> afr <u>S</u> hokr	Rural
<u>F</u> atheyya ' <u>A</u> ssal	NPUP	<u>I</u> mbaba	Urban W.C.
<u>J</u> aber ' <u>A</u> bd <u>A</u> l-' <u>A</u> ziz	Nasserite	<u>D</u> ogqi	Urban Mixed

No'man Jom'a	Neo-Wafd	Imbaba	Urban W.C.
Hamdi Al-Sayyed	NDP	Nozh wa 'Almaza	Urban Mixed
Mostafa Ja'far	Independent	Helwan	Industrial

Non-participant observation was applied by joining contestants and their entourage during their electoral activities. Field notes recorded the salient features of this process. Non-participant observation provided the opportunity to record some of the dynamics of running electoral campaigns, techniques used by contestants to attract support, diverse attitudes of the voters towards contestants during public gatherings, and some of the objectives of both candidates and voters in participating in elections. The period of observation described was for 27 consecutive days,¹³⁰ and was divided more or less equally between the sample. On some occasions it was also possible to find the time to attend public gatherings of contestants competing against the research subjects and these opportunities assisted in broadening the scope of analysis and reasserting some of the findings obtained from our own research sample.

The time limitation imposed by the authorities was our biggest obstacle as it prevented us from expanding our research sample and from spending more time with each contestant. Also, electoral campaigning was very chaotic in that very few contestants or their assistants extended their campaign plans to more than a few days ahead, if that. Organised public gatherings were usually the only activities planned a few days in advance, but even then they were sometimes prone to cancellation or rescheduling. Sometimes we would join a contestant and his assistants at

¹³⁰ Most electoral activity began around 4pm and continued sometimes until 2 or 3 am.

their base only to observe them debate for hours what course of campaign action to pursue for that same evening. This "spontaneous" method of campaigning gave us first hand insight into some aspects of election campaigns which politicians and specialists had only briefly touched upon during our interviews. However, it also meant that data was not acquired in a systematic manner since circumstances more than individuals tended to dictate the course of events.

Extended Interviews: The extended interviews we conducted during our 1995/6 visit to Egypt were primarily with our sample contestants. Apart from Hamdi Al-Sayyed (NDP) whom we had interviewed several times during our previous visit to Egypt, there was initially no personal contact with any of the other nine contestants.¹³¹ However, prior to meeting these contestants, we managed to accumulate some background information on them through our established contacts. Once we had met, we were able to obtain information directly from them as a result of personal interviews which were more or less modelled around the extended interviews we had conducted the previous year. Again, some of the contestants provided rather formal responses, but most of them were less cautious. Perhaps this was because they were already familiar with our research through our mutual contacts and hence decided it was best to accelerate the familiarisation process.

Towards the end of our stay in Egypt we conducted several more extended interviews with certain specialists and politicians. The purpose of these interviews was primarily to clarify specific queries and corroborate certain data accumulated during the electoral period. We therefore specifically selected individuals who did not compete in the 1995 elections and whom we had maintained particularly

¹³¹ There were previous telephone conversations with 'Adel Husayn during the 1994/5 period, however, due to an unexpected court case, we were unable to meet him in person at that time.

close relations with, so that this concluding part of the research would be subject to less fettered responses.

Informal interviews: During our time with the contestant the data accumulated from the extended interviews and non-participant observation was supplemented by informal interviews with the contestants and their assistants. Depending on the issue or circumstances we would ask either the contestant or an aide to elaborate upon the background or significance of a topic or action which was unclear at the time. We focused as much attention as possible on the assistants in order to obtain as much data as possible on the campaign methods and campaign costs of the particular contestant they worked with. We also discussed their views on the contestant, the party the contestant represented and the type of supporters they hoped to attract by their campaign in order to compare their responses with the contestant's views and with our actual observations of the campaign. As most of the assistants were hired help rather than party members, their responses were much more straightforward than we would have expected had they been party members.

However, we could not interview many of the assistants of the Muslim Brotherhood contestant in this manner because they were not hired help but real Brotherhood members and the majority did not particularly want to talk to women. The Brotherhood contestant himself, however, spent the most time with us during extended interview research and compensated for the fact that his assistants were rather distant by personally explaining to us in great detail about his campaign strategy, costs and voters they aimed to attract.¹³² To a lesser degree, we also faced a similar problem with the assistants of the Labour Party contestant because that particular contestant had borrowed half his assistants from the Muslim Brotherhood Organisation. Like

¹³² Our extended interview with this particular contestant was split into interviews because it comprised over five hours.

the Muslim Brotherhood contestant, he also spoke to us at some length about his campaign efforts.

Public Participation: The second part of our research during our 1995/6 visit centred specifically on the role of the voters during elections. The aim was to observe and examine the social structures and values which influence the process of voter participation. Most of the research was conducted for a period of two weeks, beginning two days prior to election day. During those two weeks we were situated in a rural village based in the electoral constituency of Kafr Ghanem (Daqahliyya) as the guest of a local notable and his family.¹³³

The decision to reside in a rural community was based on several facts and assumptions about electoral activity in Egypt. First, rural areas produce the highest voter turnout in Egypt and therefore a rural area would produce a rich source of material for examination. Another reason for choosing a rural site for research is that the salient features of public participation in rural areas can to a lesser degree be applied to the urban working class areas which produce the second highest source of voter turnout in elections. However, we also took into consideration the fact that we would obtain unrestricted access inside the voting station on election day.

Our research site in comparison to many rural villages in Egypt can be considered prosperous since the overwhelming majority of inhabitants lived in red brick, rather than the familiar mudbrick houses usually associated with such areas. We were told by many of the inhabitants we spoke to that until about fifteen years ago most houses were mud brick but the exodus of many young men to work in the Gulf

¹³³ We were personally acquainted with certain members of the host's family prior to our research. However, it is not generally difficult to find a research site of this nature once a researcher develops personal acquaintances in Cairo because almost everyone there has some form of rural connection which could be utilized for such research purposes.

and other Arab states such as Jordan and Iraq during the 1980's brought much needed income into the village. This income allowed many families to purchase plots of agricultural land, modern household appliances and eventually rebuild their homes using redbrick. In fact some homes now resemble apartment blocks found in towns since some families have built self contained flats on the upper floors for their married sons. According to its inhabitants, work abroad is not as easy to obtain as it once was and apart from a few professionals and artisans, most inhabitants have returned to agriculture.

Although it is a rather large village, every family is familiar with the other local families. This is because the majority of inhabitants are at least of fourth or fifth generation local descent. There are some families which have migrated to the village but the inhabitants regard them as outsiders or "foreigners" and they are not usually fully accepted as locals until after several generations of residence and intermarriage within the village.

The village has two primary schools, one presecondary school, a health clinic, several private medical practitioners, a small police station, several small shops, a couple of coffee shops and a large open market which is set up once a week by outside traders. While most children and young adults have experienced some form of formal education, most of the older generation are illiterate. There are 6700 registered voters in the village but the number of inhabitants including children is approaching twenty thousand.

Our host was the village *'omda*,¹³⁴ a post he inherited from his father and which has been in that family for over

¹³⁴ The term *'omda* basically means village headman or chief. His main functions in the village include settling local inter or intra family disputes, entertaining important guests to the village such as government officials and communicating with such guests on behalf of the locals. Traditionally, the *'omda* is a respected and financially independent landowner because the post

seventy years. Several families in the village are wealthier than our host's family, but according to local gossip, these families have never been interested in the 'omda's post because of the effort and expense it entails. In the village, a family is considered notable if most of its male members have been literate landowners for more than three or four generations.¹³⁵ However, the general social harmony which appeared to be prevalent in the village can perhaps be attributed to the fact that the inhabitants had never actually experienced any dominant landowning "pasha" class families in their midst.

During our stay in the village, our host introduced us as a distant relative. This we believe assisted us to enter more easily into the community and gain a sort of semi-local status.¹³⁶ We spent a number of days prior to elections in the company of our host observing him interact with a couple of "outside" contestants. Since there was a local man standing for election, our host spent most of the time in the company of this local contestant and certain male

requires considerable personal qualities such as good judgement and discretion, as well as substantial personal funding for continuous hospitality expenses and occasional financial assistance to the needy. While the 'omda's post usually remains in the same family for generations, it was actually an elected post until early 1996 when it officially became an appointed post. In other words, the 'omda must now nominate himself to the government, and depending on his political record within the ministry of interior, the President decides whether or not he is to be appointed. See following chapter for an elaboration on the implications of Presidential appointments.

¹³⁵ For example, on a number of occasions we visited large and expensive looking homes of individuals whose offspring were established professionals such as teachers or lawyers or even medical doctors. We would later be told that these were not notable families because the father was perhaps an average illiterate peasant who took advantage of the free (post-1952) educational system to educate one or two of his sons and that the prosperity we saw was due to the children rather than the forefathers. On other occasions we would be informed that the occupiers of certain humble looking homes were of notable descent but for one reason or another were facing current economic hardship.

¹³⁶ The system of fabricating kinship is a common process in Egypt and is usually regarded as a practical method for speeding the familiarisation process amongst individuals or groups who are connected to the fictitious kin.

villagers discussing the elections and their plan for election day.

Observing their interaction produced invaluable data on the dynamics and significance of extended personal networking, patronage and the nature of electoral activity within the community, whilst the activities observed inside one of the local schools which substituted as the voting station on election day gave us firsthand insight of the nature and methods of electoral misconduct in Egypt. The only public campaigning during our stay was in the form of local youths roaming the streets in the evening shouting slogans for the village contestant. Local norms meant that we could not observe them other than from the "respectable" distance of the veranda. In fact, public participation in the village was much less conspicuous than in the urban areas we examined whilst accompanying our sample contestants. This reasserted our findings that elections were more along the lines of business deals and public participation in terms of attending public gatherings or rallies did not necessarily suggest genuine electoral support. Again, non-participant observation as a method of research during our residence was limited by the time constraints imposed on overall electoral activity. After election day therefore, we had no choice but to rely upon informal interviews as a means of accumulating further data on the public's role in elections.

Informal interviews: We applied this method of research to interview voters from the village, as well as voters in the constituencies of our sample contestants. We accumulated over fifty informal interviews with electoral supporters whilst accompanying the contestants on public campaigns. Prior to or immediately after a public gathering we would attempt to start a conversation with an individual, ask him about his profession, what motivated him to attend that evening's event, what was his opinion of the candidate, did he attend public gatherings for other candidates, what

determines his electoral choice, whether he voted in previous elections and so forth.

As with all our interviews we preferred to keep most of the questions open ended so that respondents had more freedom to discuss and elaborate on the issues which were of particular interest and concern to them. During the course of the interview, we would find a small group of three or four gathered around us and it might then turn into a group interview. Interviewees tended to ask what our interest in the topic was for, we would tell them that we were carrying out a study on elections for a college project. These interviews did not usually last more than half an hour per person, but our field notes recorded salient features of the motives for participation from a voter's perspective and the type of participation which occurs.

Most in-depth material however was gathered during our stay in the village. We spent many days after the elections interviewing some of the local residents. We conducted informal interviews with our host, his extended family, his guests, other villagers who were kind enough to invite us to their homes, their families and their friends.¹³⁷ Most of the questions revolved around issues such as their personal views of elections, whether they vote or "delegate" voting, what characteristics do they look for in a candidate, why they were unanimously supporting the local contestant and what was their opinion of previous representatives. Depending on the replies, we may then ask them to elaborate or cite examples. As discussions progressed, experiences, activities and debates regarding past as well as the

¹³⁷ There was usually a constant flow of villagers in the 'omda's home and many invited us to visit them in their homes. When we visited them we would conduct our interviews over some tea. After an interview we sometimes asked them whether they could introduce us to their neighbours or friends. On most occasions we did not need to because a neighbour or friend was already present and would voluntarily invite us to meet their own family. Networking was not very difficult in the village because life there in general was very communal.

current elections were shared with us by members of the community.

We relied primarily on group interviews¹³⁸ because attempting to interview inhabitants on an individual basis would not have produced satisfactory results. This is because nobody was ever alone in their home and it would have appeared an insult to others present if they were excluded from the "discussions". Furthermore asking to interview each person on their own would have produced a sort of interrogation atmosphere in a close knit community such as the village. However, the presence of friends or relatives in a relaxed social atmosphere provided more in-depth material even though individuals interrupted each other to state their own view or to expand on someone else's view.

In all we carried out interviews of this nature with one hundred villagers (men and women) mainly during the days after the elections.¹³⁹ The average interview lasted about three hours and we usually conducted two group interviews a day. Within a fortnight, election interest had died down and it became more difficult to obtain new data or individuals willing to discuss the topic in detail. As we discovered, when people showed interest in an event they would discuss it continuously, compare it to previous experiences, discuss faults or merits, and generally divulge their personal opinions in detail.¹⁴⁰ However, once interest died down, so too did the enthusiasm for

¹³⁸ An average group comprised five people.

¹³⁹ As interviews were carried out within the confines of people's homes, most group "sittings" included both the men and women of the family.

¹⁴⁰ To our surprise, everyone we spoke to (mostly comprising illiterate men and women) could name their previous representative, give examples of services he had done for the community or for individual locals, and accurately predicted who would win, as well as giving plausible reasons for their predictions. Furthermore, all the people we spoke to during the interviews were also aware that an Assembly deputy was more influential than an *lomda* in solving problems concerning the community or specific families in relations with the authorities.

discussing the subject in great depth. As we did not want to exploit the generosity of the villagers, we decided to cease our interviews. The decision to cease our investigation in the village two weeks after the elections fitted more or less with the time-framework we had planned. We were aware from previous experience that the quality of data from informal interviews depended primarily on the co-operation of respondents. We had therefore assumed (rightly), that this limited period would be the most suitable time to obtain such data since the events which surround elections are one of the few occasions which voters might show any profound interest in the subject.

In summary, as our research methods illustrate, obtaining in-depth data on contemporary electoral systems of this nature in a straightforward and systematic manner is rather difficult. Political actors can sometimes be cautious and suspicious. More often though is the fact that researchers can be misled with biased or deficient material. This may not always be intentional, but the actual environment of non-competitive multi-party elections no doubt contributes to such frailties. It is subsequently with these factors in mind that we saw the necessity to use several research techniques to corroborate the reliability of data.

1.4 Framework of Analysis

The subsequent chapters are organised around the clientelist chain which appears directly related to Egypt's controlled multi-party electoral arena. Chapter two examines the role of the President, who by virtue of his position, is the premier patron in this clientelist system. The chapter focuses predominantly upon the nature of Presidential authority, and in particular, the significance of clientelism in the context of such authority. What we want to show is how clientelist politics is an important aspect contributing towards the safeguarding of personalised rule in contemporary Egypt. As we examine President Mubarak's strategies of rule, our primary focus will be on the way in which he utilises his enormous powers

to define the arena of political contest in a constrictive manner which subsequently appears to encourage the incorporation of leading participants into the existing clientelist structure of dependency and hence control.

The role of political parties, as the second tier within the clientelist system, is examined in chapter three. The structure and dynamics of both the NDP and the opposition are assessed. The activities of and opportunities for political parties within the arena of political contest are to a large degree determined by their relationship with central government. We examine this relationship in terms of clientelist relations, rewards for conformity and methods of discipline for insubordination. The main reasons why legalised political parties appear to be left with little option but to accept these "rules of the game" are also examined to clarify and substantiate our argument. Examples derived from the "ruling" NDP, and the six 'major' opposition 'parties' - the Neo-Wafd, the Tajammu', the Nasserites, the Liberal Party, the Labour Party and the formally unrecognised Muslim Brotherhood Organisation, are examined and compared to highlight these issues.

The fourth chapter focuses specifically on electoral candidates. The relationship between candidates and party, and candidates and voters is discussed to illustrate the nature of political individualism, personal networking, role expectations and clientelism. The main argument here is that due to various factors, the majority of party candidates are compelled to adopt individualistic campaign strategies which are predominantly independent of the parties they officially represent. Furthermore, the aim is illustrate how the intended role of political activists as intermediaries between central government and those on the periphery seems to be further reinforced as a result of the expectations of voters from potential representatives. This process, in short, emphasises the reason political parties, as group entities, remain weak and are thus more easily incorporated into the clientelist structure linking the

centre to those on the periphery. Moreover, the short term material rewards which the electorates have come to expect from elections, not only ensures overall social order and their incorporation into the existing clientelist structure, but it also discreetly reinforces the government's control over them.

The concluding chapter of the research focuses on the prevailing and potential consequences of Egypt's non-competitive multi-party arena. Whilst an electoral arena of this type appears to be a useful instrument for the maintenance of the political status quo, the chapter examines the frailties of such a system and questions how long can this clientelist method of control be upheld.

In the final analysis, the aim of this thesis is to illustrate how non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt, are not simply intended as a facade aimed at stressing the regime's democratic orientations. More importantly, such elections act as an important tool for hindering the development of group-based political participation. This, in turn, contributes towards the preservation of the prevailing system of personalised rule through reaffirming and expanding the regime's system of clientelist co-option and control.

Chapter Two

The Presidency in Egypt: Mubarak's powers; conceptions; and strategies of control.

2. Introduction

Our view that non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt can best be viewed as an instrument of clientelist co-option and control, cannot be appropriately elucidated without first understanding the nature of the Presidency in post-1952 Egypt, and in particular, the significance of co-option and clientelism with regard to this Presidential system of rule.

The dominant position of the President constitutes the most salient aspect of Egypt's post-1952 political system. The Egyptian President for example, maintains a virtual monopoly over the decision-making process. As Hinnebusch noted with reference to the Sadat era:

"the president is above such formal constraints as law or the administrative regulations which bind his subordinates; he remains the sole source of major policy or ideological innovation; and he still defines and can change the rules of the political game - the conditions of political participation. The presidency today is no less a concentration of enormous personalised power than under Nasser"¹⁴¹

Such personalisation of power can still be detected in the Mubarak era. As we will emphasise in the first part of this chapter, it is due not only to the immense legal-constitutional powers vested in the Presidency, but also to the fact that Egypt's successive Presidents have focused upon strategies of rule in which co-option and clientelist mechanisms of control play an important role. These

¹⁴¹ R. Hinnebusch cited in M.Y. El-Gamal (1992), P107.

strategies are significant predominantly in ensuring the dependence of political institutions and groupings on the individual occupying the post of the President. This in turn, allows for the preservation of this personalised system of rule.

The second section focuses on the nature of President Mubarak's rule, and in particular, the factors which indicate that the embryonic multi-party arena he inherited from his predecessor is intended to clientelistically enhance, not democratically transform, the prevailing system of personal rule. This view will be illustrated as we examine the President's strategies of rule; his attitude towards the multi-party arena inherited from his predecessor; his conception of his role within it; and the utilisation of Presidential powers to ensure adherence to such conceptions. On the basis of these factors, our aim is to show how the arena of political contest is defined in a constrictive manner which logically suggests that the President's primary aim is to impede the development of genuine party competition so that the entire multi-party arena can be incorporated into (thus reaffirming and expanding) the existing clientelist structure of dependency and hence control.

2.2 The Egyptian Presidency: An Overview

Sources of power and authority

The pre-eminent position of the Egyptian President can be detected as early as 1953 when the provisional constitution formally authorised the "leader of the Revolution" the power to take any steps deemed necessary in order to protect it.¹⁴² Safeguarding the Revolution, or perhaps more appropriately, establishing the personalised system of rule which continues to characterise Egyptian politics was not difficult to achieve because although the 1952 'Revolution' began simply as a military coup, it arose:

¹⁴² T. El-Bishri (1981), P38.

"out of a 'time of troubles', and Nasser...soon emerged as a charismatic leader, embraced by Egyptians as a national hero with unmatched personal legitimacy. It was this that legitimised the regime, allowing it to transcend its purely military origins [and raise Nasser] above the rest of his colleagues - turning them, in effect, into his 'staff'." ¹⁴³

Nasser's personal charisma not only contributed towards legitimising the new regime and elevating his position above other members that comprised the Revolutionary Command Council, ¹⁴⁴ it also allowed him to construct a political system essentially devoid of institutional checks and balances. Adopting a presidential system in which the President was to be elected through popular referendum, the 1956 constitution became the first of five ¹⁴⁵ further constitutions created by Nasser to institutionalise personalised authoritarian rule. In other words, these constitutions were utilised in the authoritarian manner of being devices "important less as constraints on the abuse of power and more as legal instruments that a personal ruler could amend or rewrite to suit his power needs." ¹⁴⁶

While the growth of Nasser's charisma went hand in hand with his attainment of the status of sole decision-maker, the legal-constitutional powers vested in the Presidency have contributed towards ensuring the legacy of personal rule continued into the 1970's under Sadat. This was perhaps best illustrated when Sadat managed to overcome an internal power struggle which marked the first seven months of his Presidency. ¹⁴⁷ The move, labelled the 'corrective

¹⁴³ R.A. Hinnebusch (1990), P188.

¹⁴⁴ The Revolutionary command council comprised the core Free Officers Group that had executed the 1952 coup.

¹⁴⁵ The other four were implemented in 1958, 1962, 1964 and 1969 respectively. T. El-Bishri (1981), P39.

¹⁴⁶ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Rosberg (1982), P16.

¹⁴⁷ Sadat was, at the time of Nasser's death, the Vice-President, and through a referendum he legally acquired executive office. However, in reality, Nasser's top men had expected to share with him some form of decision-making powers, since, at best, he was considered only first among equals. Determined to remain the

revolution' coincided with the implementation of yet another constitution. The 1971 Constitution, which remains in effect to date, was constructed upon the same tenets as the previous constitutions. Consequently, to understand why, after the demise of the 'charismatic' Nasser, personalised presidential rule remained intact, it is necessary to first start by examining the manner in which this constitution (and thus the previous ones) were formulated.

President by referendum¹⁴⁸

As under Nasser, the President is officially instated by referendum. According to article 76 of the Constitution, the People's Assembly nominates the President of the Republic. The "candidate" must then obtain two thirds of the Assembly's votes before the decision is ratified through a popular plebiscite. In the case of the President's death or permanent disability, article 84 of the Constitution states that the Assembly Speaker temporarily assumes the Chief Executive's position until a new President is instated. Since the Assembly can only refer one person to a national plebiscite (article 76), this means that the President does not compete for his position. Rather, this procedure of appointment automatically raises him above any mechanisms whereby he would have to compete with other opponents.

In such a context, the Egyptian President's official claim to office is not formally grounded on the basis of a majority support, but on the basis of near unanimous support, as reflected in the astounding percentage of "yes" votes officially declared after such plebiscites. The

ultimate source of power within the political system, he embarked upon strengthening the Presidency by removing from the elite body actual and potential opposition. The most prominent of whom were Nasser's Minister of Interior, Sha'rawi Jom'a, Sami Sharaf, Director of Nasser's Personal Security Services, Nasser's Minister of Defence, Muhammad Fawzi, and First Secretary of the ASU, 'Ali Sabri.

¹⁴⁸All articles quoted are derived from the 1971 Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt, State Information Service Press (Egypt), 1981 copy.

results of Mubarak's 1987 Presidential referendum for example, were formally declared by the Ministry of Interior as producing a massive 88.5% voter turn-out, ninety-seven percent of whom apparently voted "yes". As the turnout had in fact been low, observers were forced to note that such: "government claims appeared a reversion to the false plebiscites of Nasser and Sadat. And in particular, they were "...disturbed that Mubarak went along with this charade."¹⁴⁹ Indeed, like his predecessors, Mubarak has shown few qualms about the dubiousness of his referendum results. Publicly embracing the results of his 1993 referendum results for example, the President declared: "all I can say is that I was moved by the high percentage of the people who turned out to vote. I believe that I have never seen such massive numbers of ballots in my life."¹⁵⁰ Whilst political legitimacy in an authoritarian context, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, tends to be determined upon certain factors predominantly related to the achievements of the individual in office, the point here is that regardless of the authenticity of referenda as a method of reaching office, the fact remains that such extraordinary results allow the Egyptian President to formally claim total popular support and thus absolute legal legitimacy.

Presidential terms

Article 77 of the constitution defines a Presidential term as six years, and according to the same article there are no limits to the number of terms a President is re-nominated. This constitutional prerogative means that Egyptian Presidents can, quite legally, remain in office for life. Both Nasser and Sadat died in office and to judge from the current situation, it appears Mubarak is also to follow this trend.

¹⁴⁹ A. Lesch (1989), p93.

¹⁵⁰ BBC SWB 7 October 1993/ ME/ 1813/MED/8.

It is worth noting that both Sadat and Mubarak initially proclaimed their reluctance to rule for more than two terms. In fact, Sadat appeared so adamant, that he formally implemented a two term limitation in the original article 77 of the 1971 Constitution. However, as he subsequently had a change of mind, the article was duly amended through a plebiscite in 1980 so that he could remain in office. Mubarak also initially declared his disapproval of long term Presidential rule. As he declared in 1984, "I do not conceal from you the fact that I believe that the assumption of the office of the President by any one of us should not exceed two terms." He also added "It pleases me that I shall be the first President to whom this rule will apply."¹⁵¹ However, like Sadat, Mubarak changed his mind and accepted re-nomination for the third term of office. As he explained: "this high position [of the Presidency] though one of distinction and splendour, means for me no more than toil, sweat and constant effort ...There is no gain, respite or ambition, but toil and sacrifice that continue day after day to protect this dear homeland." Yet, characteristic of authoritarian rulers, it would seem that Mubarak had by then begun to perceive himself as indispensable to the nation. Hence, in his view, "the call of duty" left him with "no other choice but to... assume the honour of responsibility regardless of troubles and difficulties".¹⁵²

Significantly, although both Sadat and Mubarak initially advocated the idea of a two-term Presidency, the fact that both Presidents changed their mind, illustrates the difference between formal political procedures, whereby the Assembly officially chooses the President, and the reality, in which the President actually decides his own tenure in office.

¹⁵¹ BBC SWB 26 June 1984/ ME/7679/A/1.

¹⁵² BBC MSME 24 July 1993/307240158-YGS3Y1/9307226.

The People's Assembly

It can be argued that the People's Assembly is not obliged to re-nominate the President at the end of a Presidential term. This, legally, is possible. It is also possible, on a basis of two-third majority vote, for the Assembly to file charge against the President for committing high treason or any other "criminal act" (article 85). However, the Egyptian legislature has never exercised this prerogative. Neither has it ever decided against re-nominating an incumbent President.

The People's Assembly is, in fact, granted a number of constitutional prerogatives which should in theory counterbalance the office of the Chief Executive. For example, while the President is granted the right to appoint and dismiss the entire Cabinet, which comprise the Prime Minister, his deputies, the Ministers and their deputies (article 141), the Assembly, according to article 124, is entitled to address questions to any of its members concerning matters within their jurisdiction. If the Assembly is not satisfied with the performance of the Cabinet or any of its individual members, then it is entitled to withdraw its vote of confidence (article 126). As stipulated in article 128, if the Assembly withdraws its confidence from any of the Ministers or their deputies, the individual in question is expected to resign his office. The same article also stipulates that if the Prime Minister is found responsible before the Assembly, then he too must submit his resignation. It must be noted however, that whether under Nasser, Sadat or Mubarak's leadership, the Assembly has never resorted to exercising its withdrawal of confidence with regard to any member of the President's cabinet. If a Prime Minister, Minister or even a whole Cabinet is deemed competent or otherwise, this is a decision which has invariably been determined solely by the President.

Another important prerogative of the Assembly is that of formally monitoring the considerable legislative powers accorded to the Egyptian President. As stipulated by article 147 for example, the President, in the Assembly's absence, and in situations which "cannot suffer delay" has the right to issue decisions which have the force of law. However, according to the same article, such decisions must be submitted to the Assembly within fifteen days from the date of issuance. In the case where the Assembly is dissolved or is in recess (usually July to October), then the President is legally obliged to submit the decisions on its first meeting. If any decisions are not submitted to the Assembly, or if the Assembly declines to ratify such decisions, then "their force of law disappears with retroactive effect".

In the presence of the Assembly, the Egyptian President can also authorise the issuing of resolutions which have the force of law (article 108). This article, known as the "Delegation Act" has the potential to enhance the President's legislative powers considerably as it provides him with the right to rule by decree. Therefore, in efforts to present a formal distribution of power, the same article stipulates that the President can only be granted such power upon the approval of the Assembly and only for a defined period of time. Furthermore, the President must point out to the Assembly "the subjects of such resolutions and the grounds upon which they are based."

While the President enjoys the right to conclude treaties, as confirmed by article 151, such treaties must be presented to the Assembly accompanied by suitable clarification. The conclusion of important treaties such as peace settlements, alliance pacts, commercial and maritime treaties and any other treaties involving the rights of sovereignty, territorial modifications, or agreements involving additional charges excluded from the State budget, then President is required to first seek the Assembly's approval. The President's power to declare war

(article 150) is also formally hindered by the article's stipulation that he must first seek the approval of the People's Assembly. In reality, however, there is evidence to suggest that it is precisely within the realms of such important issues that the Egyptian President excludes the Assembly and even his own cabinet from any form of participation.¹⁵³

The powers of the Egyptian President formally extend to his exclusive right to implement a state of emergency (article 148). The President, according to article one of the prevailing Emergency Law 162 of 1958, is entitled to declare a state of emergency "whenever security or public order are jeopardised within the Republic or in any of its regions, whether due to war or circumstances threatening war, national unrest, general disasters or the outbreak of an epidemic"¹⁵⁴ Under such a vaguely termed declaration, the President is entitled to safeguard security and public order by restricting the freedom of movement, assembly and residence of the citizens. However, although this law can enhance presidential power through its potential to suspend the constitutional rights of all citizens of the Republic, the President's right to declare a state of emergency is officially restrained by the Assembly's supervisory role. According to article 148 of the constitution the President can issue a state of emergency on condition that he submits such a proclamation to the Assembly within fifteen days for approval. The same article also states that "in all cases" a President's decision to proclaim a state of emergency cannot extend beyond a "limited" period without the Assembly's approval.

¹⁵³ For example, Sayyed Mara'i, father-in-law to one of Sadat's daughters and the then speaker of the Assembly, claimed he knew nothing of Sadat's decision to enter the 1973 war against Israel. Moreover, he strongly doubted: "that anyone other than Ahmed Ismael (the War Minister) knew." See M. Y. El-Gamal (1992), P191.

¹⁵⁴ Emergency Law 162 of 1958, Article one, cit. in M. El-Ghamry (September 1995), P14.

In view of the latter point, all three Egyptian Presidents have managed to call for and obtain a formal state of emergency each of which has lasted for an extraordinary long period of time. During the period between 1956 and 1963 for example, Nasser ruled under a state of emergency using the pretext of the threat of an offensive against Egypt. By June 1967, another state of emergency was declared by Nasser due to the 1967 Egyptian-Israeli war. Although declaring a state of emergency during a war is not uncommon, it is remarkable that while the 1967 war was almost over before it started, the state of emergency extended for a total of thirteen simultaneous years. This means that even after Nasser's death in 1970, Sadat continued to rule under emergency measures for another decade. In his last year of rule, this law was eventually lifted only to be re-instated upon his assassination in October 1981. Since then, Mubarak has continued to request and obtain the Assembly's approval to maintain emergency law, on the grounds of violence and terrorism.¹⁵⁵

Yet one should stress that the People's Assembly is constitutionally empowered to question and even challenge presidential authority. And the fact that it refrains from doing so, cannot be attributed to genuine unanimous approval of presidential policies. Rather, the People's Assembly has been confined to the role of rubber-stamping presidential decisions because its powers are in fact restricted by certain presidential powers which are beyond its control.

The legislative powers of the Assembly for example, can be virtually eliminated as a result of the President's authority to by-pass the Assembly. According to article 152 of the Constitution, the President is entitled "to call a referendum of the People on important matters related to the supreme interests of the country." Consequently, if the

¹⁵⁵ See: Table to show the Declarations of a State of Emergency during the Period 1914-1995 in M. El-Ghamry (September 1995), P13.

President decides to endorse his proposals through referendum, then it is impossible for the Assembly to intervene or deliberate upon the subject matter. In addition, the potential use of referendum not only hinders the Assembly's legislative role, it also restrains its supervisory role. Thus if the Assembly decides to use its constitutional prerogative of withdrawing its vote of confidence from the Cabinet (article 126), the President can refuse to endorse the decision (article 127) and subsequently take the matter to a public referendum, as is his legal entitlement.

It must be noted however that the President in Egypt does generally refrain from using referendum except in circumstances where it is a formal requirement, as in the case of initiating constitutional changes. The reason for not needing to by-pass the Assembly by referendum is largely linked to the fact that there is little motivation to do so. The bulk of laws passed through the legislature are initiated by the President in the first place. Moreover, according to one veteran Assembly member whose career spans all three presidential eras, almost all presidential proposals are passed by the required two-third majority with little if any deliberation at all.¹⁵⁶

The 1990 Electoral Law amendment for example, illustrates the extent to which the legislature's role is predominately one of formalising presidential decisions. In May 1990, the Supreme Constitutional Court struck down a section of the 1986 Electoral Law. Although features of this case will be examined in more detail later in the thesis, for now suffice it to state that President Mubarak decided to comply with the ruling. In doing so, the President set up a "technical preparatory committee" whose task was to remove and revise the parts of the Electoral Law found unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court. This eight member Committee comprised two constitutional law

¹⁵⁶ Personal interview with Fikri Al-Jazzar, 2/1/95, Cairo.

professors, two legal experts from the Ministry of Justice, two police officers from the Ministry of Interior who possessed doctoral degrees in law, the Minister of Justice and the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. In other words, the Committee was so narrowly composed, it did not include any elected members of parliament to represent either the dominant party or the members of the Opposition who had initiated the Court challenge in the first place. Moreover, the draft recommendations were promptly passed as legislation without the President even pausing to allow any "input and comment" on the matter. As the Opposition emphasised in a formal statement, the revised Law was drafted "single-handedly and in absolute secrecy."¹⁵⁷ The point here is that the swiftness with which the legislation was passed illustrates the extent to which the majority of Assembly members are willing to overlook matters, even those concerning their own interest, rather than challenge the decisions of the President.

In retrospect, it is very difficult to do otherwise. The Assembly's refusal to comply with the President, can result in his decision to invoke his powers to dissolve the Assembly. As article 136 of the Constitution states, the Egyptian President is empowered to dissolve the People's Assembly if "necessary and after a referendum of the People." In such a case, the President is formally required to issue a decision terminating the sessions of the Assembly and then conduct a referendum within thirty days. If, or more realistically, when, the public's approval is officially announced, the President then proceeds to set a date for new legislative elections. Naturally the power to dissolve the Assembly has enormous implications for the Assembly's conduct and ultimately the balance of power within the decision making process. If the Assembly decides to take on a role which extends beyond supporting and formalising presidential legislation, the President can

¹⁵⁷ Egypt: Electoral Concerns, News from Middle East Watch, New York Office, (November 15 1990), PP5-6.

resort to referendum and thus dissolve it. The consequence not only being the inevitable disruption and inconvenience of new elections, but the dissolution of the Assembly which can then allow the President to exclude 'unruly' politicians from parliament.

Presidential patronage
and the issue of political participation

The President's power to exclude non-conforming politicians from the Assembly, can best be understood in view of the President's clientelist control over political participation and the way in which it has enhanced the system of personal rule whilst marginalising the role of political parties in post-1952 Egypt. Prior to 1952, a multi-party parliamentary system functioned within the framework of a constitutional monarchy. Yet the abolition of the monarchy was followed by a temporary suspension of multi-party activity. Under the pretext that multi-partyism constituted both an obstacle to national unity and a betrayal of the regime's ideological goals of social equity and justice,¹⁵⁸ this temporary suspension of political parties thus became a total ban.

Egypt's move towards a single party was, as in most developing nations during the nationalist struggle era, primarily intended to function as a device for generating an attitude of obedience to authority and acceptance of the measures enacted by the new ruler. As the author of an early study on post-independent West African states put it: "with few exceptions the trend has been for one man in each state to be elevated to a position of great power... Often the constitution reflects this domination of the state not only by a single party, but, within that party, by a single man."¹⁵⁹ Consequently, while the formal purpose of this all-encompassing type of party was to provide a mechanism

¹⁵⁸ A.E. Hillal Dessouki (1981), P11.

¹⁵⁹ K. Post (1968), P96 cited in R.H. Jackson and C.G. Roseberg (1982), P24.

whereby the majority of the people would meaningfully participate in the political process, in reality, this was rarely the case.

For Nasser in particular, the President feared that an organised, single party with popular participation or decision-making powers may result in a Soviet style system which could potentially challenge his personal position as the ultimate source of legitimacy and power.¹⁶⁰ This fear subsequently impelled the President to use the party "more as a means of mobilising political support than as a vehicle for political participation."¹⁶¹ The extent to which the single party was intended to be no more than "an extension of one and the same command structure - the President"¹⁶² was reflected in the nature of political participation at the time. Potential candidates for office were not only subjected to rigorous scrutiny, but were dependent upon presidential decrees to grant their authorisation to participate.¹⁶³ In addition, electoral results were processed and announced, not by an independent body, but by the Ministry of Interior. This system continues to be in effect to this date. The President's strategy it seems, was to ensure that those who reached the legislature were aware their position was not acquired by independent means but by his personal will and patronage.¹⁶⁴ Evidently, this aim was achieved as none of the three consecutive organisations¹⁶⁵ under Nasser's one party system

¹⁶⁰ In response to a private enquiry as to why the party cannot be strengthened, Nasser replied " If I allow the party to expand where would that leave me? We would end up like the Soviet system where every decision made has to pass through party committees and could be rejected. What a waste of time." Relayed during personal interview with Dr Rif'at Sa'id, 9 January 1995.

¹⁶¹ A. H. Dessouki (1981), P15.

¹⁶² I. Harik (1973), P90.

¹⁶³ R. Stephens (1971), P544.

¹⁶⁴ Personal interview, Dr Rif'at Sa'id, 8 January 1996. Based on a conversation between interviewee and Nasser's Minister of Interior, Sha'rawi Jom'a.

¹⁶⁵ The Liberation Rally (1952-56), the National Union (1956-1962) and the Arab Socialist Union (1962-1972)

managed to emerge as independent political entities that "reflected the structure of social forces [or] served as vehicles through which the dominant social force could extend, moderate, and legitimise its power."¹⁶⁶

In view of this personalised system of rule, the decision to change 'the rules' of political participation and transform the political arena from a one party to a multi-party system in 1977 can arguably be regarded as Sadat's personal policy initiative.¹⁶⁷ There did however appear to be a need to "satisfy participatory pressures",¹⁶⁸ but since the expansion of formal political groupings and organised political contest could rally diverse constituencies of supporters which would potentially challenge the very existence of personalised authoritarian regimes, Sadat's move to authorise an official opposition was hardly aimed at establishing a more democratic form of government. Instead, 'liberalising' the political arena for Sadat, appears to have been intended to serve other purposes. Namely to differentiate his regime from Nasser's in order to appeal to his new Western allies and to cultivate an image of political liberalisation to coincide with the implementation of his programme to liberalise the economy. Also, on another level, Sadat's objective was to use the multi-party arena as a mechanism with which to enhance the strategy of divide and rule. The aim, it seems, was to encourage overt division in elite opinion, refrain from taking sides, and consequently adopt the role of arbiter so as to make himself immune from attack.¹⁶⁹

As the nature of political parties will be examined in detail in the following chapter, suffice it for now to note

¹⁶⁶ S. Huntington (1968), P249.

¹⁶⁷ This is reflected in the fact that both high officials within the government and the army - for disparate reasons - opposed the idea of a multi-party system. See R.A. Hinnebusch, Jr. (1985), PP158-160.

¹⁶⁸ R.A. Hinnebusch, Jr. (1985), P159.

¹⁶⁹ R.A. Hinnebusch Jr. (1988), P62.

that the extent to which Sadat intended to create a weak multi-party system that could be manipulated for such purposes is reflected in the manner in which political parties emerged at the time. The 'ruling' National Democratic Party (NDP) for example, was in itself a creation of Sadat. Having perceived the ASU as a potential threat to his personal consolidation of power even in the aftermath of his 'corrective revolution', Sadat proceeded in 1974 to divide the party into three platforms. The President then decided in 1977, to disband the ASU altogether and confer upon these platforms the official status of fully fledged political parties.

However, when a year later, Sadat decided to create his own party (the NDP), approximately two hundred and fifty members of the People's Assembly rushed to join the President's new party.¹⁷⁰ Such a move was invariably related to the fact that the President's party would ensure for its members direct access to state resources, material and otherwise. Our main point however, is that since most of its members were originally members of the disbanded ASU, the NDP's creation was more a product of presidential instigation than pressures of an organised constituency. Put differently, the mass conversion from 'socialist' to 'democratic' ideology formally displayed by joining the President's newly created party not only implied the desire to remain under direct presidential patronage, but that the emergence of 'ruling' NDP was no more reflective of constituency interests than under Nasser's party system.

As with the NDP, the first two opposition parties were also created from above, initially in 1976 as official platforms within the ASU, and then in 1977 as independent parties. Hence, although these two opposition parties- the National Progressive Union Party (Al-Tajamu') and the Liberal Party (Al-'Ahrar)- were theoretically expected to represent socialist and liberal tendencies respectively, they did not

¹⁷⁰ Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

develop as a result of an independent political movement that represented certain social forces within society. Instead, both parties were also artificially created by the President who chose old associates to head them, and in attempts to signal his official stamp of approval and thus ensure their loyalty, he encouraged some of his supporters to join them.

The same procedures can also be detected during the formation of the Socialist Labour Party in 1978. Ibrahim Shokri, the then agriculture minister, was encouraged by Sadat to launch this new party after the President felt that both Tajammu' and Ahrar leaders were not the 'supportive' opposition he had expected. Especially in the light of their criticism to his Egyptian-Israeli peace efforts.¹⁷¹ During that period, the Muslim Brotherhood's revival can arguably be understood in a similar context. That is, although the group was (and remains), formally unrecognised as a legal party, it was Sadat who personally encouraged its re-emergence as a counter-balance to what he eventually came to regard as his opposition. Namely sections of the elite that comprised of "Nasserites, leftists, liberal intellectuals [and] Wafdists survivors."¹⁷²

The Neo-Wafd's revival in January 1978, proved the exception to the rule: it was not artificially induced by the President. Yet it must be noted that as soon as Sadat felt its base of support might pose a potential threat to the regime, he issued a decree forbidding those who had held prominent political positions prior to the revolution from party membership. The consequence of this being that the Neo-Wafd's veteran leaders were banned from participation and the party was forced to suspend its activities.

¹⁷¹ For example, see Sadat-Opposition relations in: J. Waterbury (1983), PP354-388; R.A. Hinnebusch, Jr. (1985), PP158-1970.

¹⁷² M. Heikal (1983), P128.

The stringent control over political participation even after the transformation to a multi-party arena, has meant that entry to the legislature in post-1952 Egypt has been primarily a consequence of presidential patronage, rather than a reflection of independent political contest. It is therefore understandable that, for the majority of politicians who reach the Assembly, being subservient to the President is the only way that they can ensure their continued incumbency. Equally important is the fact that the clientelist domination of the President appears so embedded that it extends to the other major political and state institutions.

Presidential patronage extended

The powers of appointment -and dismissal- accorded to the President, combined with the patterns of recruitment into these posts, is illustrative of the manner in which the Egyptian President enhances his control over the major institutions of the state. Beginning at the apex of the political structure to include advisors, prime ministers, ministers and provincial governors, these powers of appointment extend to incorporate all the most senior posts within the ruling party, armed forces, judiciary, bureaucracy, state-owned media, public enterprises, national universities and the formal Islamic establishment. More importantly the pattern of recruitment into these posts is ill-defined in that individuals are not appointed on the basis of superior professional merit or as a result of ethnic, linguistic or other categorical considerations. Rather, personal attributes such as trustworthiness and loyalty comprise the most important consideration for the president when using appointment powers.

In order to procure such loyalty, Springborg explains how informal organisations such as the family, the *duf'a* (graduating class) and the *shilla* (group of friends) are

utilised as clientelist mechanisms of elite recruitment.¹⁷³ Prior to 1952, patterns of entry into the political elite were based almost exclusively within the realms of wealthy landed owning families who, through inter-marriage and extensive clientelist networks, monopolised top political posts. While the political and economic reforms that followed 1952 undermined the prominent role of the family as an informal unit of political organisation, it did not eliminate it. On the contrary, in order to obtain "administrative expertise" and "political connections to segments of the articulate public" Nasser was himself "perfectly willing to recruit into his cabinets and into the ASU *ancien régime* politicians from prestigious families".¹⁷⁴ Thus what emerged within the post-1952 regime, was a pattern in which the importance of the family in the recruitment process was maintained, but was more dependent upon personal contacts within the state apparatus than upon the material wealth of the family.

In other words, the prospect of an elite appointment in post-1952 Egypt, became less dependent upon the socio-economic status of an individual's family, yet more enhanced if a member of the family occupied the ranks of the upper elite strata (and could thus recommend the individual in question to the President or someone close to the President). The *duf'a* network is perhaps most clearly depicted under Nasser's rule since the officers who led the 1952 coup, the Revolutionary Command Council which ensued, and the majority of top elite posts during that period were largely occupied by members of the same military academy *duf'a*. Finally, the *shilla* as a mechanism of recruitment is more extensive in scope. Since it is based upon the concept of 'friendship', it incorporates both a wide range of social acquaintances some of whom may also be linked to the president through family or *duf'a* ties. The disparate mixture of elites under Sadat correlates more to the *shilla*

¹⁷³ R. Springborg (1975), PP83-108.

¹⁷⁴ R. Springborg (1975), P93.

than *duf'a* network. Since the majority of those occupying top posts under Mubarak's rule have been his close associates during the vice-presidency period, it would seem the *shilla* tie is also depicted, albeit less conspicuously, under Mubarak.

As the President- for practical reasons, focuses his appointment powers primarily on the highest level positions of the state, his subordinates are provided, as a form of tangible goods, with lower level appointment powers which in their role as patrons to individuals still lower in status, they are able to distribute to their own clients. It is when attempting to understand the large, highly diffuse and opportunistic patron-client ties at that lower level of the elite structure that informal organisations such as those defined by Springborg are perhaps most useful. However, the highest level of the clientelist structure is more stable and straightforward because of two main factors.

First, the underlying importance of personal loyalty impels the President to appoint into the top elite posts of the state apparatus only those individuals with whom he is personally acquainted or who come with the personal recommendations of trusted confidantes. 'Osama Al-Baz for example, acquired the position of senior presidential advisor (a position he maintains to this date) shortly after Mubarak assumed the presidency, largely as a result of the close relationship cultivated when Mubarak occupied the post of Vice-President and Al-Baz was assigned the role of his advisor on foreign affairs. President Mubarak's decision to appoint 'Amr Musa in 1992 as Minister of Foreign Affairs is also illustrative of this clientelist pattern of elite recruitment. In other words, Musa's appointment to the post which he still occupies to this date was not based on any apparent formal considerations on the President's part. But because Al-Baz, as one of the most trusted presidential confidantes, personally recommended Musa - previously a Foreign Ministry employee

and a client of Al-Baz - to the President. In fact, it would be very difficult to find, whether under the presidency of Nasser, Sadat or Mubarak, a member of the inner elite circle whom the President or one of closest advisors were not personally acquainted with prior to recruitment.

This leads to the second main factor regarding the stability of the patron client ties at the apex of this clientelist structure. The individuals on this elite level are tied to one patron - the President. Hence, in the absence of a higher patron to which to attach themselves, the main objective is to preserve their existing relationship by remaining subservient. It is for this reason, one can argue, that this segment of the elite have a very good chance of maintaining their posts for a long time. The government of 'Atef Sidqi (1986-1996), for example, comprised the longest serving since the first modern cabinet was formed in 1914.¹⁷⁵ Yet, in view of this static, record-breaking predicament, Mubarak's response was: "I'm not going to take the decision [to change the cabinet] only to please those calling for change"¹⁷⁶ And in fact he has not. The cabinet has thus remained more or less the same with the only significant change being the replacement of Sidqi in early 1996. Yet, even then, Mubarak did not search very far for a successor. The President's choice, an inconspicuous bureaucrat, Kamal Al-Janzuri had been an incumbent Minister throughout the entire Mubarak years.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁵ Even so, it is worth noting that many ministers have held their portfolios for an even longer period. The Minister of Information, Safwat Al-Sharif; the Minister of Electricity and Energy, Maher 'Abaza; and the Minister of Agriculture and Food Securities, Yusef Wali, have been particularly conspicuous in that they have held exactly the same portfolios respectively since Mubarak came to power.

¹⁷⁶ Middle East Times Egypt, 3-9 December 1995.

¹⁷⁷ Since 1982, Al-Janzuri has held the portfolio of Minister of Planning. In 1985, he was appointed Minister of Financial Affairs and International Investment and Co-operation, in addition to retaining the Ministry of Planning. In 1992 Al-Janzuri was

Finally, this clientelistic power structure is perhaps even more secured due to the fact that a change in the person occupying the Presidency, is not followed by a massive shift in the elite personnel of the system. That is, whilst each President may appoint a 'new' group of individuals who are personally close to him into top level positions, the existing elite personnel are not forced into retirement, but are largely reshuffled to other senior posts within the political and state apparatus.¹⁷⁸ Invariably, this process has led to "an amorphous, sprawling elite of officers, bureaucrats, professors, *ancien régime* politicians, and others..."¹⁷⁹. Yet, more significantly, such an enormous patronage network also strains the "bonds of elite cohesion"¹⁸⁰, which, in turn, diminishes the potential emergence of powerful and challenging factions within the regime.¹⁸¹ In addition, the provision of permanent state bases to take in the pool of circulating elites not only promotes the acquiescence of these elites, but also ensures that the prospect of a powerful group of them emerging outside the state apparatus to challenge the regime remains practically unfeasible. The fact that political mobility is ultimately dependent upon personal rather than organisational loyalty, has thus reduced the roles of

appointed Vice-Prime Minister and subsequently left the Ministry of Financial Affairs, but not the Ministry of Planning.

¹⁷⁸ The impact on the clients of the 'reshuffled' elite is somewhat minimal since the process of maximising individual opportunities of upward mobility means patron-client ties on that level are essentially ephemeral.

¹⁷⁹ R. Springborg (1975), P92.

¹⁸⁰ R. Springborg (1975), P92.

¹⁸¹ For example, although the Leftist faction that attempted to oust Sadat in 1971 comprised important ASU leaders, the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defence and their respective clientelist power bases, it failed to achieve its objectives and was instead purged by Sadat. This "was perhaps due to its Byzantine complexity, which would have made a well-timed, carefully co-ordinated strike difficult and security leaks inevitable." Springborg (1975), P95. The Minister of Defence, General Muhammad Fawzi who spent 1971-1976 imprisoned as a result of his involvement in the faction also hinted at this probability by stating to us that "Sadat sensed we might have him for dinner, so he decided to have us for lunch." Personal interview, 15 Nov. 1995, Cairo.

formal organisations and institutions to little more than "vehicles through which personal connections are established"¹⁸²

The personalised power of the President in post-1952 Egypt is further enhanced by the President's personal control of state funds and resources. Hence, although an annual budget is presented to the Assembly at the beginning of each fiscal year for approval, this is primarily a formality and specific resource allocations are neither revealed to the Assembly, nor pursued through formal channels. Instead, the allocation of resources to the various political and state organisations is primarily determined according to the personal and political objectives of the President in office. In a study on Egypt's ministerial elite, for example, El-Gamal reveals how, during the Sadat era, a swearing match took place between two ministers over the allocation of cement to their respective ministries. The scene, between the former Minister of Defence 'Abd Al-Halim 'Abu Ghazala, and the former Minister of Construction and Housing, Hasaballah Al-Kafrawi, was randomly (and personally) settled by Sadat in favour of 'Abu Ghazala. The reason, it seems, is because Abu Ghazala was closer to Sadat than Al-Kafrawi, and as the author noted, "those closest to the President won".¹⁸³

On the basis of such informal and personalistic mechanisms of resource allocation, it would not be contentious to argue, as El-Gamal has done, the extent of the President's closeness to one Minister over another would ultimately determine the outcome of such conflicts. However, even though in that particular episode 'Abu Ghazala did happen to be personally closer to Sadat than Al-Kafrawi, the fact that the Minister of Defence gained the upper hand over a civilian Minister cannot be simply attributed to the President's personal disposition. This is especially the

¹⁸² R. Springborg (1975), p104.

¹⁸³ M.Y. El-Gamal (1992), PP186-187.

case if one takes into account the role of the Egyptian military and the way in which presidential patronage appears to safeguard that role.

Since the Nasser period, the military establishment has come to perform a prominent role as the protector of Egypt's post-1952 regime. It was after all a military coup which brought about the post-1952 regime, and the fact that all three Presidents were originally military officers cannot be overlooked. Securing the protection of the armed forces however, has not simply been due to these factors, but primarily because of the extent of presidential patronage extended in that direction. Under Nasser, the most prominent form of patronage bestowed upon the military was in the form of appointments to key political and state positions ranging from ministerial posts to top posts in the then newly nationalised economy. In the post Nasser era, the armed forces were "no longer a corporate member of the Alliance of the Working Forces of the People"¹⁸⁴ and the re-emergence of a multi-party arena was followed by a ban on military personnel joining political parties or voting. Presidential patronage in the form of elite political and bureaucratic appointments subsequently became less conspicuous. However, this move was supplemented through additional material benefits for officers and their families. Such benefits have included subsidised housing, automobiles, hospitals, sporting clubs and even electrical household appliances and grocery stores. State financed study programmes in Egypt and abroad also became more accessible to officers in the ensuing patronage transformation. Presidential appointment as a form of patronage was not however completely eliminated. As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, the President still appoints the top military positions including the cabinet posts of Minister of Defence and Minister of War Production. In addition, Nasser's tradition of reserving the presidentially appointed posts of Egypt's provincial

¹⁸⁴ N. Ayubi (1991), P243.

governors for retired (military and police) officers, was diligently preserved by his successors.

As a consequence of such patronage, it is logical to assume the military has maintained a vested interest in protecting and upholding the personalised authoritarian system of post-1952 Egypt. Illustrative of this is the fact that since 1952, the military has never refused a President's call to combat mass riots such as in 1968¹⁸⁵ and 1977,¹⁸⁶ or even to confront challengers from within the system as in 1986.¹⁸⁷ The extent of the military's loyalty to the President and its obedience to his decisions, is perhaps most poignantly reflected in the military's support of Mubarak's declaration to join forces with Western nations against Iraq in the 1990 Gulf War.

In the final analysis, the system of personalised authoritarian rule in post-1952 Egypt was constructed by Nasser and sustained by his successors due to several factors which ensure the absence of autonomous group entities and thus the President's direct control over all state apparatuses. The President's prerogative of appointing and dismissing the Cabinet for example, ensures his personal control over the entire executive branch of government. In addition, his chairmanship of a party which gains no less than three-quarters of the Assembly seats whilst essentially being devoid of any independent power base, and his legal-constitutional authority to overrule the Assembly and even dissolve it, ensures the legislature's acceptance for him to rule by presidential

¹⁸⁵ Nasser resorted to calling in the army, when, in February 1968, public anger erupted into demonstrations against the system at large in the wake of the 1967 Israeli defeat.

¹⁸⁶ Government subsidies on basic food commodities has been a policy pursued since 1952 and constitutes a huge drain on the budget. Hence, the 1977 food riots erupted when Sadat attempted to balance the budget deficit by removing some of the subsidies.

¹⁸⁷ Again, the military proved indispensable, this time for Mubarak, when thousands of army conscripts in the Central Security Forces, caused havoc in Cairo on the news that their military service might be extended. Personally present in Cairo during this incident.

decree, enact emergency measures and in short, dominate the entire decision-making process. Furthermore, the President's enormous appointment powers and the way they are utilised, ensure the top operators of the state apparatuses are tied to the President on a clientelist rather than institutional basis. Hence, the conglomeration of such powers in the hands of the President, coupled with his patronage to, and position as, Commander-in-Chief to the armed forces, have allowed the President to sustain personal, authoritarian rule in post-1952 Egypt.

The development of a multi-party arena in which political parties function as cohesive, autonomous group entities competing for control of government, would, in such a context, logically obliterate the foundations on which this personalised system of rule is based. Put differently, the system of personalised rule in post-1952 Egypt, as we have stressed, has prevailed for over four decades predominately as a combined result of the enormous legal-constitutional powers vested in the Presidency and the clientelist structure which - through the safeguarding of this structure by Egypt's three successive Presidents- has ensured the dependency of political actors and institutions on the individual occupying the office of the President. The pre-eminent position of the President in contemporary Egypt therefore, is inherently linked to the preservation of this clientelist structure of dependency and hence control. Reaffirming and expanding this clientelist structure to incorporate potential challengers to the existing political system, is thus a logical step for a President intent on preserving the political status-quo. It is in this context that one can thus understand President Mubarak's strategies of rule with regard to the newly constructed multi-party arena he inherited upon assuming office.

2.3 The Multi-Party Arena under Mubarak

Inheriting the political arena

As Vice-President, Mubarak ascended to power on Sadat's death with relative ease. However, while both of Mubarak's predecessors came to power with a record of political activity including being core members of the Free-Officers group, Mubarak could not claim such a legacy nor could he claim direct association with any pre-revolutionary nationalist activities. In fact, as an airforce pilot, Mubarak's main political credential prior to assuming office was the position bestowed on him by Sadat in 1973 of Vice-President. Mubarak initially justified his relative political inexperience by claiming he received intensive "training" from Sadat, and that this gave him the opportunity to benefit and learn "a great deal from a man with more than forty years of experience in politics".¹⁸⁸ However Sadat's unpopularity in the last few years of rule and his subsequent fate at the hands of extremist opponents meant it was necessary for Mubarak to distance himself from his predecessor in order to cultivate the necessary support to consolidate his own position.

The success of such a strategy, one can argue, meant the new President had to deal with two levels of discontent. On one level was the opposition: Sadat's message of liberalism had fuelled greater expectations from opposition parties than was actually intended. And shortly prior to his assassination by Islamic extremists in 1981, Sadat had reverted to a wholesale crackdown on political opponents. Although assassination, as one analyst notes, "is a haphazard, individual act, and it's chances of success are random, not a barometer of the stability of the regime or the strength of the opposition",¹⁸⁹ the experience

¹⁸⁸ "Egypt: The Quest..." State Information Service, Cairo, undated, P7.

¹⁸⁹ I.W. Zartman (1990), P239.

nevertheless emphasised the mounting tension between government and political opponents.

On the other level, Mubarak had inherited what was potentially a turbulent civil society as a result of his predecessor's economic experiment. The open door policy (*infitaḥ*) introduced by Sadat had stimulated little investment in productive industries or for export. Instead, it produced a consumption boom that left the economy in deficit and debt.¹⁹⁰ Reforms aimed at structural adjustment of economic imbalances were not only necessary, but could also produce overt popular hostility - as the food riots of 1977 had previously illustrated. In view of these considerations, the new President could hardly continue the repressive tactics employed by Sadat prior to his assassination.

It would therefore appear that Mubarak's attempt to portray himself as a staunch supporter of democracy was predominately influenced by efforts aimed initially at containing both levels of discontent. By advocating democracy for example, it could be that the President was finding a way with which to distribute the responsibility entailed from the anticipated implementation of unpopular economic reforms. As he put it shortly after coming to power, "The philosophy on which we should all agree and which should guide our work is that Egypt stands above all. Egypt is not a society of a privileged minority which monopolises power...Egypt is for all her sons who, with their thought and toil build their own country on the basis of equal opportunity and equality in shouldering burdens."¹⁹¹ The same argument was also expressed in more explicit terms a few months later: "I believe democracy is the best guarantee of our future... I totally oppose the

¹⁹⁰ See for example: R.A.Hinnebusch, (1993), "The politics of economic reform in Egypt", Third world Quarterly, Vol.14, No1, PP159-171.

¹⁹¹ Address to the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, 8 November 1981, State Information Service, Cairo.

centralisation of power and I have no wish to monopolise decision-making because the country belongs to all of us and we all share a responsibility for it."¹⁹²

It should also be noted that Egypt, since the 1979 peace accords with Israel, had come to depend upon substantial aid from its Western allies, and in particular from the United States. In view of the afflicted economy Mubarak had come to inherit, it would be fair to assert that the apparent advocacy of democracy was also a strategy aimed at safeguarding the flow of this much needed aid, which, from the United States alone is estimated to be approximately \$2.1 billion per annum.¹⁹³ As Owen notes: "The appeal of democracy (however limited in practice) bolsters the legitimacy of the regime both internationally and domestically. As far as the former is concerned, it [makes] it easier for the [the US] president and the US congress to provide aid."¹⁹⁴

The President's attempt to prove his democratic intent was illustrated most prominently when he ordered the release of politicians arrested by Sadat and ordered the reinstatement of the university professors and journalists who had been dismissed as a result of their political activities to their former positions. Yet one can argue that the President's apparent courting of the opposition was not only an attempt to gain their support in the face of harsh economic conditions and a potentially turbulent society. It also seems to have been perceived as a useful strategy with which to avoid a two-front war with moderate and extremist opponents. That is, by proclaiming that terrorism "shall not affect our conviction that the reliable shield of democracy is the right of every citizen" nor would it "shake our belief that the problems of democracy can only

¹⁹² Public Address, April 1982, cf. "Egypt a Decade..." Egyptian State Information Service, London, 1991.

¹⁹³ The Wall Street Journal Europe, 15 June 1993.

¹⁹⁴ R. Owen (1994), P190.

be solved with greater democracy",¹⁹⁵ it would appear the President was hoping to cultivate support of the moderate opposition in his quest to isolate the radical Islamic groups (*Jam'eyat*) which mushroomed during the Sadat period.¹⁹⁶

Mubarak's strategy appears to have achieved initial success for opposition resentment become replaced with almost unanimous support of the new President. On behalf of the Opposition, Ibrahim Shokri, leader of the Labour Party, publicly announced his optimism as he declared: "The opposition welcomes the principles set forth by President Mubarak, particularly his call for political participation, spirit of initiative [and] adherence to democracy."¹⁹⁷ More enthusiastic was Fu'ad Seraj al-Din, leader of the Neo-Wafd party, "One fact I am sure of now that I have full confidence in [Mubarak's] courage" he noted, "is that we will, together with God's help, surmount the plight of our country... because he respects the freedom of opinion... speech and political parties... President Mubarak wants to create a civilised democratic country in accordance with internationally established concepts."¹⁹⁸ Judging from the tone of statements such as these however, the problem with Mubarak's advocating of democracy, was that, as with Sadat, it produced higher expectations on the part of the opposition than was intended.

Emergence of authoritarian views

The fact that Mubarak initially projected a commitment to democracy as a mechanism to stabilise the political arena and consolidate his own position rather than to expand political participation, can be detected more evidently post-1983. This period can arguably be regarded as the

¹⁹⁵ Address to the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, 8 November 1981, State Information Service, Cairo.

¹⁹⁶ See for example Nemat Guenena (Summer 1986), "The 'Jihad' An 'Islamic Alternative' in Egypt", Cairo Papers in Social Science, Volume 9, Monograph 2.

¹⁹⁷ Mayo, 9 December 1981.

¹⁹⁸ October, 29 December 1981.

years when the real Mubarak era began and thus when his real political views began to emerge. The signs that Mubarak was consolidating his power post-1983 was evident from several perspectives. For example whereas the President acquired the formal position of head of the NDP upon taking power, it is not erroneous to aver that it was not until the party won the first parliamentary elections under his leadership in May 1984 that his position as its patron was actually established. Moreover, as the President's control over the NDP and thus the legislature was cemented, it is also worth noting that September and October that same year witnessed the first food riot under his rule. Due to the price of subsidised bread being doubled, a food riot erupted in the Delta town of Kafr al-Dawwar. According to official reports, one person died and twenty eight were injured in the ensuing clashes with the security forces.¹⁹⁹ The fact that a riot of this nature was swiftly contained before it spread on a national scale undoubtedly accentuated Mubarak's confidence that he had also established himself well in control the state's coercive powers.²⁰⁰

In such a context it is not too suprising that the benevolent manner in which Mubarak believes the Egyptians perceive him and his assumption that his personal political priorities are one and the same as theirs, is more evident. For example, during his initial years in office, the new President attempted to avoid portraying himself in a patriarchal light and publicly stressed that there was "no ruler and ruled" and that all citizens were "equal".²⁰¹ Yet later, the President's perceptions of himself appear to have been elevated to the extent that he believed the

¹⁹⁹ N. Ayubi (1991), P229.

²⁰⁰ This feeling was perhaps further reinforced after the 1986 Central Security Forces (CFS) insurrection was promptly suppressed by the army during the first day of riots, hence indicating the military's loyalty to the President. Personal observation, Cairo, April 1986.

²⁰¹ For example see Mubarak's address to the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, 14 October 1981, State Information Service, Cairo.

"Egyptian people regard me as a father figure" and that like himself, "[t]hey just want stability."²⁰²

Mubarak's authoritarian inclinations and over-developed sense of importance however, are more prominently reflected in the events surrounding the annual opening of parliament. Usually held in November of every year, the official inauguration of parliament comprises the sole event which brings the President to the Assembly. The Assembly's debating chamber where the President gives his speech is naturally constricted in space since the event is attended by both Assembly and Consultative Council members. Although the event possesses a 'Presidential Monarch' aura because it is the President's sole annual venture to the Assembly, it is the humiliating treatment which the members endure that emphasises Mubarak's perception of his own position as President.

On the scheduled day, the deputies are expected to arrive between eight and ten o'clock in the morning. If anyone arrives later than ten o'clock, they are automatically turned away. For 'security' reasons, the army takes over from the police on that day the role of guarding the Assembly. And more poignantly, the army's duty includes searching each deputy thoroughly before allowing him or her entry into the chamber. Once inside the chamber, no-one is allowed out, even to visit the lavatory. As Mubarak himself is not expected until eleven o'clock, the deputies are subsequently locked inside the chamber for the one hour between the last deputy entering and the President's expected arrival.

Following Mubarak's speech, which on average lasts one hour, the President then joins the Assembly Speaker for an informal chat in the latter's office. In the meantime, the deputies remain locked inside the chamber until the

²⁰² For example see Mubarak's interview to The Sunday Times, 24 April 1994, London.

President departs from the Assembly's premises. Not surprisingly, the hours of confinement result in a number of casualties every year, as frail and elderly deputies faint from suffocation or bladder retention. However, even as deputies shout and bang on the chamber doors for assistance at these times, the pleas are ignored and the doors remain locked until the President's eventual departure.²⁰³ According to one veteran politician, this annual humiliation is not even a feature inherited from Mubarak's predecessors.²⁰⁴

It must be noted that the above 'security' arrangements were first imposed immediately after Sadat's assassination as Mubarak was called to assume the presidency. As the political situation following Sadat's assassination was initially unclear, such precautions can arguably be viewed as an isolated precaution to ensure the safe accession of the new President. However, the fact that in Mubarak's second decade of power, this procedure continues to be practised, suggests the President not only regards himself above the legislature, but also views it with deep mistrust. Yet, as the majority of legislature incumbents are from his own party, it would seem that such 'precautions' might be perhaps more directed at members of the opposition. Which in turn reflects an authoritarian instinct of insecurity when facing political opponents - even those playing by the formal rules.

It is a paradox therefore to note how Mubarak refers to the Assembly as though it was an independent and equal force in the political system. In a speech marking the start of a new parliamentary year for example, he thanked the locked-up Assembly audience for fulfilling the "task of legislation and control with admiration and appreciation" and for having "controlled and corrected [the] work of the

²⁰³ Personal interviews with Egyptian MPs, November-January 1994/5, Cairo.

²⁰⁴ Personal interview, Fikri Al-Jazzar, 3 January 1995, Cairo.

executive authority".²⁰⁵ On the basis of such comments, one can be led to believe that Mubarak's authoritarian perceptions are so deeply embedded that he regards the voice of a few powerless opposition members in the Assembly as genuine legislative participation.

This however cannot be the case, for the President is fully aware of what genuine political participation entails, and has himself remarked that it is futile to "ask me to follow the same democracy as the UK, France, the US or Germany. We want to reach that standard of democracy, but we cannot do so overnight."²⁰⁶ Furthermore, he even justified why this sort of democracy cannot be achieved by claiming Egypt is: "not a wealthy country. If we cease economic activity and grant freedom...we consequently place the people in an unstable state."²⁰⁷ And "without stability, there will be no democracy at all because instability leads to disorder which contradicts with democracy...[therefore] the first duty of those who advocate democracy is to be keen on the socio-economic stability, which is the only way for democracy."²⁰⁸

Interpretations of stability and socio-economic development

Mubarak, as we noted previously, has not always been consistent in his claims as to whether he perceived the political arena under his rule as democratic or not. There is little doubt however, that since 1983, he has attempted to depict himself less as an advocate of democracy and more as the guardian of stability and order. This does not imply his intention is to abolish multi-party participation altogether. This would have been illogical, for as he himself admitted, political liberalisation "is our safety

²⁰⁵ State Information Service, 12 November 1994, Cairo.

²⁰⁶ Mubarak interview, cited in R. Owen (1994), P189.

²⁰⁷ BBC SWB, 14 February 1987, ME/8485/A/2.

²⁰⁸ Mubarak's speech marking national Police Day, January 25, 1993, State information Service, 1994, Cairo.

valve."²⁰⁹ Yet the shift of opinion can be detected by the fact that whereas democracy was previously proclaimed as the "most effective weapon with which we are resolved to meet the challenges facing us",²¹⁰ the President began to publicly concede that stability was more crucial a factor "for Egypt's present and future success."²¹¹ And that an "overdose" of democracy "can be harmful" except in small doses "in proportion to our ability to absorb them".²¹²

The advocating of socio-economic stability over political liberalisation in Egypt logically means the President can argue the necessity for responsible political participation, which in his view means not: "slipping into the chaos of ideas or conflicting stances which could threaten the supreme interests of the homeland."²¹³ This, in turn, means the President can justify challenges to his rule by discrediting any opposition forces who do not conform to his views by accusing them of being unpatriotic "saboteurs and evildoers"²¹⁴ who "want a state of anarchy and chaos"²¹⁵ in order to "weaken the domestic front."²¹⁶

The President's attempt to project socio-economic development as a priority over political development, does not however appear to have been accompanied by overtly ambitious plans. Mubarak's first five-year plan for example, focused on the necessary yet hardly inspiring task of "consolidating the infrastructure". As he explained in 1987: "We developed the infrastructure of electricity, road

²⁰⁹ Mubarak interview, *Al-Majalla*, 12-18 July 1989.

²¹⁰ Address to the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, 14 October 1981, State Information Service, Cairo.

²¹¹ BBCSWB 7 April 1987, ME/8558/A/2

²¹² Ibid..

²¹³ BBC MSME, 31 May 1994, 405310291/DPAREN/940531.

²¹⁴ President's May Day Speech 1988, State Information Service, Cairo.

²¹⁵ The Financial Times, 23 January 1986.

²¹⁶ President's May Day Speech 1993, State Information Service, Cairo.

networks, drinking water and sanitary drainage...Such is the importance of the infrastructure. It is impossible to build a house without water. Likewise, it is impossible to build a house without sanitary drainage...[or it] would flood an entire area."²¹⁷ In 1994, he was still reminding the public of this "great achievement":

" You are all aware of what the situation was in 1982 when I took over responsibility; but now we have forgotten. There is everything now: water, sewage, telephones, railroads, more houses being built... Have we forgotten that none of this existed... Have you forgotten the telephone problem? I am only reminding you. You are not young and you know all this; you saw all these things... If one can remember where we stood and where we are today, then he can see how great this achievement has been."²¹⁸

Perhaps Mubarak's perception that socio-economic development should take precedence over political development might have generated popular support if it was conveyed through a particular vision for the future. However, the President appears reluctant to do so, preferring instead to find justifications for the apparent lack of economic progress. Some of his justifications have in fact appeared to point the blame at the Egyptian citizens, the most popular claim being: "the problem of population growth, which exceeds economic and social development rates [and which] may prove too difficult for our capabilities to handle in the near future."²¹⁹

Obviously, Egypt's economic situation is not simply the result of population growth, but also because of more significant factors attributed to the policies of the regime. As one American report states, for: "many years, Egyptian economic policies, relying on state ownership, bureaucratic controls and protection from competition,

²¹⁷ BBC MSME, 12 May 1987, 705127317/BINNZN/870512.

²¹⁸ BBC SWB, 10 May 1994, MEW/0332/WME/3.

²¹⁹ BBC SWB, 10 May 1994, MEW/0332/WME/7.

stifled productivity, efficiency, and economic growth". Furthermore, the commitments of the state to "provide free public services, guaranteed employment, and subsidised goods...led to chronic fiscal and monetary indiscipline, generating excess demand, serious inflation, balance-of-payments deficits, growing international indebtedness and foreign exchange shortages".²²⁰

Yet it should be noted that these "commitments" which were implemented by Nasser, constitute a major mechanism of social control in post-1952 Egypt. It is therefore not unexpected that whilst Mubarak - with great push from amongst others, the World Bank and the IMF- had little choice but to continue Sadat's path of privatisation and economic liberalisation, he has acted like a reluctant participant. Indicative of this is the fact the constitution continues to declare Egypt to be a socialist state with a centrally planned economy and Mubarak has not shown any enthusiasm with regard to making appropriate amendments. Instead, when confronted with the question of constitutional amendments he has argued that such issues are "complex" and that "we are going through economic and social reforms, working very hard for the development of the country, looking for the stability of the country...when the time is suitable we will do what is needed."²²¹

The absence of reassuring legal change however, has made it difficult to attract significant private investment into Egypt's ailing economy. This is illustrated by the fact that of the three hundred and fourteen state-owned enterprises officially targeted for privatisation in 1990, only forty had been sold to private investors by 1996.²²²

²²⁰ United States Embassy (Cairo), Foreign Economic Trends and Their Implications for the United States: Report for the Arab Republic of Egypt, 1992, P1, cited in T. Parfitt (1993), P13.

²²¹ Reuter News Service, REUTME, 5 October 1993, 310052713/7LSXUA/931005.

²²² Financial Times Survey: Egypt, 13 May 1997.

That Mubarak is concerned about such a poor sale outcome however, is unlikely, for had it not been imposed as part of Egypt's reform package agreement with the IMF,²²³ it is highly improbable that the President would personally initiate what he perceives as the dismantling of the public sector. As his earlier claims reveal: "I wonder about those who advocate selling the public sector, because this would be a dangerous step taken at the cost of the simple citizen...The public sector regulates the private one, thus offering goods to the public at reasonable prices, because state control is a must. Selling the public sector would create a socio-economic problem."²²⁴

In the final analysis, Mubarak appears to constantly find some form of justification for initiating as little change as possible in the socio-economic front, even though he maintains that political liberalisation cannot be achieved without this. Such justifications range from his proclaimed concern for 'stability' which would be threatened as a result of the "workers [who] could burn things up",²²⁵ to apparent 'humanitarian' considerations such as "the psychological aspect of the people".²²⁶ Moreover, the President has shown few qualms with regard to the exploitation of Western concerns regarding both the threat of political Islam and Egypt's strategic significance. Mubarak, for example, does not appear hesitant, when justifying the virtual absence of socio-economic development, to 'remind' the United States and Egypt's other official Western creditors (labelled the Paris Club), of the Islamic militants, whom he argues, will attempt "to take advantage of the hardships caused by Egypt's economic

²²³ For details on the IMF-Egypt reform package for years 1987/88 to 1991/2 See H. Handoussa (1991), PP.10-15. For summary of Handoussa's work, see T. Parfitt (1993), P14.

²²⁴ Mubarak's words in 1987, cited in J. Waterbury (1993), P142.

²²⁵ Mubarak Interview, Newsweek, 19/6/95.

²²⁶ Mubarak Interview, The Financial Times, 22/4/93.

reform."²²⁷ An argument which in turn allows the President to continue trading on Egypt's "role in the "peace process" for concessional aid and credit flows."²²⁸ In comparison to Turkey, Mexico and India for example:

"Only Egypt could collect rents from the Suez Canal, and only Egypt benefited from the enormous strategic rents paid by the United States in return for the Camp David Accords of 1979 and for Egypt's continuing role in promoting overall Arab understanding with Israel. U.S. Economic assistance [alone] to Egypt totalled \$13.2 billion between 1975 and 1990, with an additional 3.2 billion through the Commodity Import Programme. Military assistance, began in 1980, reached \$12.6 billion by 1990. The total flow of U.S. assistance thus cumulated to \$27.4 billion over fifteen years."²²⁹

What this implies therefore, is that being in the unique position of having access to such avenues of financial assistance, one should expect to have seen some substantial developments on the socio-economic front. The fact that this has not been the case has led observers to question Mubarak's overall leadership ability. As Gauch notes, with his consolidation of power and thus:

"his increased confidence and pride, it seems Mubarak should be moving less cautiously now and taking bigger steps. Yet he continues to lack the ability of Sadat and before him, President Gamal Abdel Nasser, to strategize, innovate and subsequently motivate the public."²³⁰

Indeed, over the years, it seems that Mubarak has lacked the stature of a visionary leader. He has repeatedly proclaimed his intention to eventually achieve both political and socio-economic liberalisation. However, the fact that after nearly two decades in power, he continues

²²⁷ BBC World Service broadcast, 2 April 1993, cited in T. Parfitt (1993), P18.

²²⁸ J. Waterbury (1993), P60.

²²⁹ J. Waterbury (1993), P80.

²³⁰ S. Gauch (1991), P41.

to maintain concern for stability as justification for the lack of any explicit development in either front, cannot be simply attributed to an inferior personal ability to strategize and innovate change. This circumspect attitude can instead be interpreted as a strategy aimed at safeguarding the system of personalised authoritarian rule. As Tripp noted with regard to contemporary Egyptian politics: "the legacy of authoritarian politics...has led successive governments to give priority to their requirements for maintaining order within the state" and the pursuit of this objective "has thus led them not to question the end itself, but to concentrate on the means by which that end can be achieved."²³¹ It is along these lines therefore, that one can understand that Mubarak's interpretation of stability and his apparent endorsement of socio-economic development does not denote an intention to transform the existing political system. This assumption is in fact further reflected in the manner by which multi-party participation under his rule is contained and controlled.

Strategies to contain and control multi-Party participation

President Mubarak's decision to continue allowing some opposition presence within the People's Assembly shows, on the surface, some degree of flexibility. Logically, the broad considerations which Mubarak has taken into account, and which we discussed previously, means that to a certain extent, he had little alternative but to allow the continuation of a 'multi-party' legislature. Yet, it is difficult to depict this apparent flexibility as an indication of his intent to emancipate the Assembly from established presidential control. The President's continuous reliance upon emergency laws for example, is perhaps one of the most prominent indications of his attempt to maintain a tight grip on multi-party participation and hence entry into the Assembly.

²³¹ C. Tripp (1991), P160.

As we mentioned previously, the adoption of emergency laws has been justified by Mubarak as a necessary measure to combat terrorism and protect the country's stability.²³² However, while the President plays up the threat of Islamic fundamentalism as justification for the implementation of emergency laws, he has also been known to concede that the Islamic threat in Egypt is not particularly dangerous.²³³ The fact that the President on occasion inadvertently undermines the reasons for placing emergency measures in the first place, is itself a strong indication that the enforced state of emergency is not simply focused on containing terrorist activities.

Indeed, this notion is extremely plausible because under a state of emergency, censorship is potentially exercised over all activities ranging from monitoring political action to limiting freedom of expression. Individuals can be arrested solely on the basis of suspicion of involvement in political crimes, and the gathering of five or more people or the public distribution of any political literature without official government authorisation provides the authorities with direct legal authority to arrest all those involved. Thus, in order to hold to hold gatherings, rallies, distribute pamphlets, or pursue any of the standard channels associated with the cultivation of supporters on the grass roots level, political parties are expected to apply for formal authorisation at the local

²³² For example, with reference to opposition's objection to the continuous renewal of emergency law, Mubarak responded by arguing that such measures were necessary "in order to confront terrorism [and] protect democracy and stability in this country". His discomfort at the idea of ending the state of emergency is evident when he reminded critics of his position by adding "I am in charge and I have the authority to adopt [emergency] measures... I am in charge of the country's stability" see the President's 1988 May Day Address, State Information Service, Cairo.

²³³ For example in one interview the President claimed the fundamentalist problem in Egypt cannot be compared to that in Algeria and that he believed it to be so insignificant in Egypt that he expected it would be eradicated within a few months. See The Financial Times, London, 22 April 1993.

police station, who then pass the request on to the Ministry of Interior for a decision. Except on specific occasions- namely during the month leading up to legislative elections, such permission has automatically been denied.²³⁴

One particular case which warrants a mention is an incident in 1992 involving Rif'at Sa'id, the *Tajammu'* Party's secretary general and the then Minister of Interior, 'Abd al-Halim Musa. According to Sa'id, he attempted to organise a small rally in which members of the intelligentsia, playwrights and popular television and film personalities agreed to participate in order to demonstrate their support for the government in light of the slaughter of fifteen Egyptian Coptic Christians in Upper Egypt by Islamic militants. Although the presence of media personalities in an anti-Islamic protest could have provided the government with some popular support in its fight against the Islamic fundamentalists, the Minister of Interior refused to authorise Sa'id's application by claiming that his refusal was based on principle (*mabda'*): "if I permit the rally, today you are demonstrating against the Islamists and maybe tomorrow you will demonstrate against us."²³⁵ Again, the Minister's reply appears to confirm that the state of emergency is not only aimed at terrorist activities, but perhaps more importantly at controlling legal political participation.

The enforced state of emergency also appears to be a useful mechanism with which to limit the role of the Egyptian judiciary in aspects relating to political participation. This is because during a state of emergency and under the

²³⁴ During the electoral period candidates have been known to bypass official channels of application and hold gatherings and small rallies without notifying the authorities for fear the applications would be rejected or formal authorisation would be intentionally delayed. Those who do work through the formal channels tend to be more constrained as a result of the deployment of security personnel infiltrating their gatherings. Personal observation & interviews during 1995 elections.

²³⁵ Personal interview with Rif'at Sa'id, 9 January 1995, Cairo.

pretext of national security, the forty-five days limit for holding an accused in custody for questioning could be extended indefinitely without a formal court hearing. In this respect, the judiciary does not have any role or influence over a case if the accused is not presented to court. Equally important is the 1966 Law on the Military Judiciary which rules that "during a state of emergency, the President of the Republic has the right to refer to the military judiciary any crime which is punishable under the Penal Code or under any other law."²³⁶ As a consequence, the law allows the authorities a virtual carte blanche to detain and prosecute civilians in military courts regardless of whether or not their activity endangers fundamental interests. Moreover, while civilians condemned to death in a criminal court are permitted to appeal to Egypt's highest appeal court, the Court of Cassation, in a military court, there is no appeal once the three military officer judges pass verdict.

Once again there appears to be a pattern which suggests the use of military courts is targeted primarily at political activists whose main crime is rejecting the political status quo. The judiciary has for example, played an important political role in defending the right of political parties to be formed. Hence, while the government rejected the license application of a large number of political parties including that of the Nasserites and the neo-Wafd, once individual parties resorted to the courts, the government complied with adverse court rulings and granted the necessary permits. The judiciary also played a prominent role in the various electoral law battles between the opposition and government. And also, even though the rulings appeared to be in favour of its opponents, the government obeyed the court verdicts. Considering that Mubarak has consistently claimed that one of his most important aims is to "establish justice and...champion

²³⁶ cf. Military Courts in Egypt: courts without...., CHRLA Report, Cairo, September 1995.

rights and the supremacy of law"²³⁷, the outcome of such public cases undoubtedly contributed towards verifying his apparent commitment of ensuring "We have no power exceeding that of law".²³⁸

Yet on closer inspection, such landmark verdicts were obeyed by the government because their implications for the political status-quo were, at best, minimal. The government, one can argue, eventually came to accept that particulars such as electoral laws were of little significance in view of the fact that it maintained complete monopoly over the state apparatus and its resources. Furthermore, all the political parties that the government licensed as a result of court rulings were relatively insignificant from many perspectives and thus, in the prevailing circumstances, cannot be perceived as potential challengers to power. Unlike religiously based political organisations, which Mubarak perceives as "very dangerous."²³⁹

Hence, it is in situations where the regime's fundamental interests are thought to be at stake, that Mubarak's more poised claims such as: "confrontation of terrorism cannot be achieved by security techniques alone, but requires action on the part of society as a whole with its democratic institutions to combat terrorism politically, informatively and ideologically"²⁴⁰ is replaced by forceful assertions that he would not allow "human rights to become a slogan to protect terrorists."²⁴¹ More importantly, in such situations, there appears to be little hesitation in by-passing the judiciary establishment and referring the political trials of civilians to military jurisdiction.

²³⁷ BBC MSME, 24 July 1993, 307240160/GV881E/930726.

²³⁸ BBC SWB 4 May 1993, ME/1679/A/7.

²³⁹ See Mubarak's Interview in The Sunday Times, 24 April 1994.

²⁴⁰ Mubarak's address before joint session of the People's Assembly and the Shura Council, December 15 1990, State Information Service, Cairo.

²⁴¹ Middle East Watch, Vol.5, Issue 3, July 1993.

This was most prominently illustrated in October 1992 when Mubarak decreed two such cases be tried in the Military Court. The verdict for both cases, swiftly handed down within a month of trial, included eight defendants being sentenced to death. The harshness of the sentences was extremely evident in light of the fact that those: "sentenced to death were not charged with specific acts of violence but with planning the overthrow of the government and the assassination of some leaders."²⁴²

One can argue nevertheless that the adoption of emergency measures is officially implemented to combat the activities of political extremists working outside the legal framework. The fact that such measures also constrict the participation of those working within the formal arena, can, theoretically, be viewed as a price to pay for national security. Yet if we return to Mubarak's attempts to manipulate the electoral laws, one cannot perceive such actions in the same context as emergency laws. After all, legislative elections are of primary concern only to those who want to reach public office through legal means. Hence, the decision to change the electoral laws prior to the first legislative elections under his rule reflects the President's conception of political liberalisation and shows that it does not include losing power even through legal means. This manifestation was virtually confirmed when the then Prime Minister, Fu'ad Mohyi Al-Din, personally admitted that under the new system, one of the clauses- which outlawed independent candidates- was intended to limit access to the legislature of individuals who "might not be 'known' to the regime."²⁴³

Although we will discuss the effects of the electoral law amendments in more detail in the following chapter, it is worth noting here that the unprecedented move by the

²⁴² The Washington Post, December 4, 1992; cited from Middle East Watch, Vol. 5, Issue 3, July 1993.

²⁴³ R. Owen (1994), P186.

opposition to formally challenge the government through the Supreme Constitutional Court and have these laws annulled, reflects the extent to which the opposition viewed these laws as biased. It would seem that the opposition's reaction and perhaps more importantly, Mubarak's concern for his 'democratic' image impelled him to modify the law three years later. Striving to present the modified 1986 version as evidence of his democratic intent, Mubarak called this a venture to "consolidate democracy" and mark Egypt's arrival "at a common understanding of the role of democracy".²⁴⁴

The President's decision to amend the electoral laws and call for premature elections rather than wait for a court decision or ignore the legal outcome altogether, could be better understood in view of his own political circumstances. His renomination for a second presidential term was due at the end of 1987 and although his party's domination of the legislature meant his position was secure, an adverse court ruling could have tarnished the legitimacy of this nomination since it would have appeared that the president was elected under an unconstitutional Assembly.²⁴⁵

The electoral system did eventually revert to the old individual candidacy system in 1990. Yet as we mentioned above, and will discuss in detail later, reverting to the old electoral system, one can argue, was also the result of Mubarak's eventual realisation that electoral laws are of little significance when his consolidation of power provided him with other mechanisms such as patronage and electoral malpractice, to ensure entry to the Assembly remained stringently controlled.

²⁴⁴ Middle East Contemporary Survey, Volume XI, (1987), P324.

²⁴⁵ In May 1987 elections - one month after the elections- the Supreme Constitutional Court did in fact rule the 1983 electoral law incompatible with the constitution, but by then, a new Assembly under the amended electoral laws was already in session.

The President's personal control of the legislature in post-1952 Egypt, has, as we discussed previously, been highly dependent upon the President's position as head and patron of the ruling party. Under Mubarak it is difficult to detect profound changes in this established pattern of control. In the absence of clear ideological orientations or financial independence, the NDP, as will be examined in the following chapter, remains dependent upon government resources to build its electoral bases. Moreover, the process of selecting NDP candidates for legislative elections continues to be highly controlled by the President. Thus, while all members of the NDP are entitled to personally apply for electoral nomination, the application short-list, as NDP assistant secretary-general, Kamal al-Shazli confirmed, is submitted "to President Mubarak so that he can make a final decision."²⁴⁶

As in most authoritarian regimes, electoral fraud in post-1952 Egypt has been a major tool used by the government to exclude certain individuals from gaining entry into the Assembly. More interestingly however is that in Egypt, it has also been used to control incumbent members of parliament. Under Nasser for example, Sharawi Gomma, the then Minister of Interior, regarded it more important to back electoral favourites through vote rigging, than less popular individuals who might actually need such irregular assistance to win. As he explained to one of our interviewees in 1967, rigging the votes of a popular individual who was most likely to win anyway, was crucial because if that person "felt that it was genuine votes that made him win, he will develop an ego and...we don't want anyone to develop any ideas of self importance, this might otherwise lead to independent thought."²⁴⁷

In his capacity as Vice-President and Vice-Chairman of the NDP, Mubarak undoubtedly became acquainted with the voting

²⁴⁶ Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

²⁴⁷ Personal Interview, Rif'at Sa'id, 8, January 1995, Cairo.

irregularities of his predecessors. Thus, as President, he asserted that: "the formation of the People's Assembly through free and honest elections and multiple parties is the beginning of a new phase of responsibilities and duties, in which we shall renew all our capabilities and review our steps".²⁴⁸ However, it is interesting to note that one of the major bones of contention between opposition and government, has been the persistent manipulation of electoral results and Mubarak's refusal to take action. In response to claims by the opposition of government malpractice during the 1984 elections for example, Mubarak chose to deny the complaints by insisting "the people have spoken their word free of any restrictions, pressure, forgery or rigging".²⁴⁹ Furthermore, he implied it was the opposition who were at fault because they "did not accept the people's decision with a democratic spirit but sought to cast doubt on the integrity and honesty of the elections".²⁵⁰

Indeed, it is difficult to accurately measure the extent of electoral malpractice under Mubarak's rule. However, a prime indication that ballot rigging and electoral irregularities are rather widespread, was highlighted after the elections of 1987 when the opposition filed suit against questionable NDP winners. The Court of Cassation found enough evidence to declare seventy-eight of the NDP's three hundred and forty-eight winning seats null and void. More significantly perhaps, was the refusal of the then Assembly Speaker, Rif'at al-Mahjub, to comply with the court's ruling on the basis that "parliament was sovereign in all matters concerning its membership."²⁵¹ Since a decision of this nature cannot be taken without the President's approval in his formal capacity of party chairman, the case evidently illustrates that Mubarak has

²⁴⁸ BBC SWB, 3 May 1984, ME/7633/A/10.

²⁴⁹ BBC SWB, 26 June 1984, ME/7679/A/1.

²⁵⁰ BBC SWB, 26 June 1984, ME/7679/A/2.

²⁵¹ Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

little hesitation in ignoring the law if he feels that some fundamental interests are at stake. In other words, it would seem, that the law in Mubarak's Egypt-as with his predecessors- is indispensable only when it serves to safeguard the interest of the regime.

Another example that indicates this to be the case is the fact that when the opposition's press freedom began to be viewed as a direct challenge to his authority, Mubarak sought to repress that freedom through the law. The case, again illustrative of the discrepancy between Mubarak's alleged views and actual practice, initially emerged as a series of attacks and counter-attacks in the form of accusations and warnings between the President and his opponents. The reason, it seems, stemmed from Mubarak's attempts to portray himself as an honest ruler who would not tolerate "hypocrisy, corruption or trading with the livelihood of the people"²⁵² nor would he be willing to "abet or cover up any corruption, even if the person involved is my closest aide".²⁵³ Yet when the opposition press, relying on the President's claims of having "lifted all press censorship" and provided "a free national party press that writes what it wants without control or censorship",²⁵⁴ began to pursue and publicise cases relating to government corruption, Mubarak did not appear to take such concerns seriously. Characteristically, his reaction focused on attempts to discredit his opponents by accusing them of "falsifying the facts and spreading lies and provocation."²⁵⁵

²⁵² BBC SWB 15 October 1981, ME/6854/A/14.

²⁵³ BBC SWB 28 April 1993, ME/1674/A/3.

²⁵⁴ BBC SWB 14 October 1993. It is worth noting that in view of the imposed participatory restrictions and the fact that the entire broadcasting media and a large section of printed media remained under direct government control, Mubarak must have perceived such a move as relatively harmless. Perhaps more so in context to Egypt's semi-literate population and the assumption that the poverty stricken mass majority are unlikely to pay fifty piasters for a newspaper.

²⁵⁵ BBCMS ME, 27 July 1992, 20720009/9MVC33 920728.

The President, evidently believes the opposition's role in the "national march" is to "offer well considered views"²⁵⁶, "but not trade accusation".²⁵⁷ Hence, it is understandable that such a critique of the government was perceived as improper, unpatriotic and thus felt it his "duty to warn against those who are increasingly talking about corruption in Egypt" because they simply "seek to weaken the domestic front [and] want to see... some negative phenomena".²⁵⁸ Yet when such critique extended too near the President for comfort, it would seem verbal 'warnings' were not considered a sufficient response.

Indicative of this was when, in the summer of 1995, Mubarak was interviewed for an American news magazine, the journalist in question brought up the subject of general public corruption in Egypt. Interestingly, the President replied: "The whole story that my sons were agents for Airbus for instance? Never. It came from the Muslim Brothers."²⁵⁹ The fact that Mubarak denied such accusations and instead chose to blame it on opponent defamation strategies is not unexpected given his customary pattern of response. The fact that he specifically mentioned his sons as an example, not only shows he was fully aware of the level such accusations had reached,²⁶⁰ but may also explain why Law 93 of 1995, which provides harsh penalties including prison sentences for the publication of false or

²⁵⁶ Al-Ahram, 23 October 1981.

²⁵⁷ Presidential Speech to a joint session of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, 8 November 1981, State Information service, Cairo.

²⁵⁸ BBC SWB 4 May 1993, ME/1679/A/7.

²⁵⁹ Mubarak interview, Newsweek, 19 June 1995.

²⁶⁰ The "Airbus" scandal, as relayed to us during our 1995-6 stay in Egypt, was that Mubarak's sons had, in early 1995, made a huge commission by selling approximately twenty aeroplanes at inflated prices to Egypt Air on behalf the "Airbus" manufacturers. The scandal appeared to be compounded when it emerged that the president had at that time decided to extend the tenure of the Managing Director of Egypt Air, Muhammad al-Rayyan, for a further three years. Al-Rayyan was due for retirement in 1995, and the extension of his appointment was rather suprising in view of rumours about his alleged corruption. Personal interviews, Nov.-Jan. 1995-6, Cairo.

malicious news, had been implemented at that particular period.²⁶¹ On justifying the new law, Mubarak himself admitted "that for eight years I have listened to many complaints [and] accusations are growing unnecessarily."²⁶² Hence it is interesting to note that after such a long time, the decision to take direct action coincided with a widespread corruption scandal affecting members of his immediate family.

In fact, when the President attempted to justify the new law, he did not actually deny the existence of corruption, but instead pointed out: "Suppose someone makes a mistake, why should you involve his relatives, who might occupy respectable positions? what business do you have to do this? It is improper for you to do this".²⁶³ On the basis of such comments, it would seem the President was evidently less concerned about rectifying the actual problem of corruption which he himself inadvertently admitted exists, and more concerned to resort to the law to prevent such a misdemeanour being publicly exposed and thus tarnishing his rule. As he put it: "What else can I do as head of state? I do not want to prevent a writer from writing... But the law is there...[to] increase the punishment; nothing more and nothing less."²⁶⁴ It is also worth noting how Mubarak's authoritarian vision emerges again through his perception that protecting his interests as President constitute one and the same as protecting the interests of the citizens. Hence his claim that the media law was imposed, not to "touch the freedom of the press" but to "rectify the mistakes that harm the interests of the citizens".²⁶⁵

²⁶¹ Moreover, to ensure this controversial law would be passed with minimal publicity, it was rushed through the Assembly on a Saturday, when most MPs were absent, and was not even mentioned on that day's parliamentary agenda. See Strangling the Press, Middle East International, 9 June 1995.

²⁶² BBCMS ME, 30 May 1995, 505300330/5VV8RC/950530.

²⁶³ BBCMS ME, 30 May 1995, 505300330/5VV8RC/950530.

²⁶⁴ BBCMS ME, 30 May 1995, 505300330/5VV8RC/950530.

²⁶⁵ BBCMS ME, 30 May 1995, 505300330/5VV8RC/950530.

The implementation of such a stringent media law, in the final analysis, is just one of several strategies which appear aimed at containing and controlling multi-party participation in Mubarak's Egypt. As we have discussed, the reliance on emergency measures, the various attempts to restrict electoral participation including the implementation of biased electoral laws, the prevalence of electoral malpractice and the President's personal involvement in selecting electoral candidates for the NDP, also constitute strategies which appear intended predominantly for such a purpose. What this means therefore, is that on the basis of such strategies, there exists little indication to suggest, on President Mubarak's part, genuine intentions to relinquish the prevailing personalised system of rule.

Furthermore, the assumption that Mubarak's aim is not simply to contain and control multi-party participation, but also to utilise it to reaffirm and expand the clientelist structure which has assisted Egypt's successive Presidents maintain the post-1952 personalised system of rule, is reflected in the fact that Mubarak, like his predecessors, continues to maintain stringent personal control over the allocation of state resources.

Mubarak's control of the NDP and hence the People's Assembly for example, means he has been in the position to demand (and obtain) under the 'Delegation Act', sole responsibility for the purchase and sale of military hardware, as well as for the entire military budget.²⁶⁶ The President's monopoly of such a major part of the decision making process, which is justified on the grounds of national security, seems not only to imply that Mubarak regards himself above accountability, but also that he perceives the legislature as untrustworthy to partake in 'sensitive' matters concerning national security. The point

²⁶⁶Personal interviews with various MPs and ex-MPs, Cairo, Nov.-Jan., 1994/5/6.

here however, and in view of the military's long-standing role as ultimate protector of Egypt's post-1952 regime, it is not contentious to argue that the President's personal control over the military's budget might be based less on 'national security' concerns, and more on efforts to safeguard the political status-quo. Indeed, if Mubarak shared decision-making powers with an independent legislature, it would be difficult for him to justify allocating an annual budget of US\$ 3.5 billion for the military. Especially in view of other pressing matters such as foreign debts which, although reduced by US\$24 billion after Egypt's role in the Gulf War, still stood at US\$26 billion in 1994.²⁶⁷

Even if Egypt's foreign debts are disregarded, the amount spent on the military is still enormous if compared to the amount spent on other sectors of the economy such as unemployment (which is estimated between 17-20 percent of the working population). In dealing with that sector, which can arguably be viewed as a breeding ground for militant extremists, an annual budget allocation for job creation schemes is slightly less than three quarters of a billion US dollars. In other words, with over half a million people a year entering the workforce, such a meagre allocation is "barely sufficient to provide employment for 10 percent of [these] new entrants".²⁶⁸

It should be noted that it was Mubarak who declared shortly after assuming power: "We opt for peace in order to prevent the continued wastage of funds used for the purchase of arms and ammunition. Such funds could now be spent for the welfare and prosperity of the Egyptian people, who have long suffered from the horrors of war in both psychological and material terms."²⁶⁹ Hence that heavy military spending has subsequently been justified by emphasising the

²⁶⁷ The Wall Street Journal Europe, 15 June 1993.

²⁶⁸ Cassandra, (1995), P12.

²⁶⁹ Mubarak interview, *October* magazine, 1 November 1981

significance of the military in protecting "our freedom, sovereignty, values and leading role in the region",²⁷⁰ appears paradoxical. What is implausible however is Mubarak's claim that the budget allocated to the military simply: "goes to pay the wages of the men, while the other half is spent on the maintenance of military equipment, food, and lodging, and clothing."²⁷¹ In fact, a patent example that the President diverts enormous funds into the military establishment to cover more than just the basic necessities, can be found in the case of Factory 200.

Factory 200, a tank assembly plant which, after nine years construction, was officially opened in 1992, constitutes the largest industrial installation in the Middle East. Apart from the fact that its economic viability has led it to be described by an Egyptian banker as "a big white elephant",²⁷² more significantly it is funded and maintained primarily through foreign aid. Thus if Mubarak can divert US\$2.5 billion of American aid and an estimated US\$450 million of state funds,²⁷³ into a project such as this, then it is evident the President's priority is not simply to sustain the military establishment, but to ensure he preserves the position of the President as its ultimate patron. Even if this seems to be at the expense of Egypt's social and economic development.

Another indication suggesting that the clientelist dependence of the major political and state apparatus on the President constitutes a major strategy of Mubarak's rule is the fact that like his predecessors, he continues to maintain direct control of the national budget. It should be noted that the People's Assembly is not excluded

²⁷⁰ BBC SWB, 1 July 1986, ME/8299/A/1.

²⁷¹ BBC SWB, 1 July 1986, ME/8299/A/1.

²⁷² Contracts to supply tanks to buyers apart from the Egyptian army has been very difficult in view of the fact that each tank costs double that of its \$2 million American made counter-part. See: The Wall Street Journal Europe, 15 June 1993.

²⁷³ Ibid., .

from overseeing the annual budget to the same extent it is excluded from the military budget. However, whilst the general budget is presented annually to the Assembly for official 'approval', its presentation format is described in the words of one member, as resembling "one of the President's public speeches."²⁷⁴ In other words, while the Assembly is presented with a broad outline of the government's policy proposals and overall budget estimates for approval prior to the start of each fiscal year, details such as specific resource allocations to the various ministries has remained solely the prerogative of the President. In preserving such an important role, it would seem that Mubarak has had little intention but to ensure that ultimately, the entire governmental and state apparatuses are no less dependent upon him, than was the case under his predecessors. Moreover, the preservation of such an important role within a multi-party context, means that political opponents also have little choice but to be dependent upon President Mubarak for their allocation of state resources. Indeed, as we examine in the following chapters, electoral participation within the government defined area makes it almost inevitable for the participating opposition to seek a share of these presidentially controlled resources.

2. 4 Conclusion

We have attempted to show the major factors which allow the President to constitute the ultimate source of power and authority in post-1952 Egypt. Mubarak's main concern, we have argued has been to safeguard this system of personal authoritarian rule. To do so, it seems the President's

²⁷⁴ Personal Interview, Fikri al-Jazzar, 3 January 1995, Cairo: Apparently to prove his honesty and to show "we are not giving you fictitious figures", Mubarak does seem to refer regularly to government spending in his major national speeches. Understandably it is presented in a vague manner - hence the comparison- such as "Industry requires replacement and modernisation.. Some machines have been in existence since 1938, and some since 1960...Some 1.1bn pounds is allocated in the 1985-6 budget for replacements and modernisation. The public sector really needs a good push in this regard." - See: Mubarak's Mayday Speech, 14, May 1985, BBCMS ME, 505147319/GC7WD6 850514.

strategy has focused upon imposing disparate constraints on the embryonic multi-party system, which, as Vice-President, he inherited from Sadat. Mubarak has attempted to justify such an approach on the logic that instability would arise if a greater measure of political liberalisation took priority over socio-economic development. Apart from the fact that there is no evidence to suggest genuine political liberalisation would set back socio-economic reform, Mubarak's argument appears even less sincere in view of his reluctance to initiate major socio-economic reforms. Reforms which amongst other things, would ultimately reduce the state sector and thus a major part of his own power base. That minor economic reforms have actually been undertaken cannot, as we have argued, be considered government initiatives, but token gestures to the international creditors whose assistance provides Mubarak with the necessary funds to uphold the clientelist structure which, along with the enormous legal-constitutional powers vested in the presidency, play an important role in the preservation of the prevailing system of personal rule.

The process of allowing for the continuation of multi-party participation within this tightly controlled political arena therefore, appears to suggest that the aim is not to provide political opponents with the opportunity to emerge as potential challengers to power, but to incorporate them into the same structure of clientelist dependence that is used to control the President's own party, and indeed, all the major institutions and groupings within the Egyptian polity. That transformations within the authoritarian polity inherited by Mubarak, were not, realistically, on his list of priorities is in fact reflected in one of his early interviews as President. As he put it:

"Egypt would go to hell if I listened to some nervous people who say "change, change!" because then what? You run and run and then the troubles begin... Do you want me to change everything? do you want me to replace an entire generation? ...The method

of electric shock is futile now. If I were to apply it, there would never be stability in the country."²⁷⁵

Whether the imposed constraints we have discussed here have actually contributed towards shaping the role of multi-party elections as a tool with which to reaffirm and expand the regime's clientelist structure, cannot, however, be properly understood without first examining the effects of these constraints on political parties in contemporary Egypt and hence their response to electoral participation as defined under the Mubarak regime. This is our main focus in the following chapter.

²⁷⁵ Mubarak interview, Al-Sharq Al-Awsat, 22 January, 1982.

Chapter Three

Political Parties in Non-Competitive Elections.

3.1 Introduction

Our primary concern in this chapter will be to examine how the arena of political contest is utilised under the Mubarak regime as an instrument with which to co-opt and subsequently control individuals representing disparate political parties. Our aim here will be as follows. We will first look at the nature of the President's National Democratic Party (NDP). The aim is to show that in spite of the fact the party is controlled by the President and his designated men to the extent it lacks compelling ideology, charismatic leadership and autonomous access to resources, its participation in legislative elections still allows it to attract and hence co-opt prominent individuals who appear to possess extensive networks of support on the parochial level.

As we previously stressed, Mubarak like his predecessors, does not appear institutionally bound to formal political organisations who share in the setting of policy. In such a context, election to the People's Assembly is not intended to confer the opportunity for such individuals to participate in the formulation, or arguably the deliberation, of public policy. Instead, what we will attempt to illustrate is how election as a member of the President's party confers the opportunity to achieve alternate gains. Namely direct access to a share of the resources that the President and his government commands. Resources, which do not simply provide those elected to the Assembly with the potential to enhance and expand their prestige and influence in their respective localities. But

also emphasises their role as intermediaries between central authorities and their respective localities.

The implications, as we will subsequently argue, are advantageous to the regime from two perspectives. The most evident being that the electoral process allows the President's party to recruit individuals and define their roles as clientelist linkages binding the periphery to the centre. On another level, it seems that his party's cohesion is hindered as a result of election to the People's Assembly being defined on such a clientelist basis. This situation is arguably ideal for the President since an organised and cohesive party, even if he is its chairman, still constitutes a potential challenge to his personal consolidation of power.

In the second part of the chapter we will focus our attention on members of the opposition who participate in the arena of political contest. As we discussed previously, the presence of opposition parties was, from a number of perspectives, viewed by Mubarak as beneficial to his rule. However, it was evident from the way in which the President imposed various impediments such as emergency measures and stringent press laws, that their presence in the formal political arena was not intended to challenge the political status quo. In the case of elections, it seems this too was also intended to act as a mechanism of control. Yet rather than blatantly suppress the activities of opponents, as in the case of emergency measures for example, we will argue that by granting opponents the opportunity to compete in the arena of political contest, the primary aim was to incorporate them into the same clientelist linkage that is utilised to control NDP members.

The extent to which elections have contributed towards defining the role of the opposition as clientelist linkages that bind the centre to the periphery, will be assessed as we look at their strategies and performance during the periods surrounding the four legislative elections of 1984,

1987, 1990 and 1995. The six "major" opposition parties - the Neo-Wafd, the NPUP, the Labour Party, the Liberal Party the Nasserite Democratic Party, and the technically illegal Muslim Brotherhood - will be used as examples.

What we will aim to emphasise is that initially, elections did not appear to influence how opposition parties perceived their role. Rather, opposition parties pre-1990 appeared generally united in perceiving participation in electoral contest as a process which would eventually lead to genuine competition for power. Since 1990 however, we will attempt to show the extent to which such an attitude began to change. In particular, we will argue that the function of elections as a mechanism of clientelist recruitment that defines and thus controls the role political activists perform, appears to have become increasingly applicable in the case of political opponents.

3.2 Elections and the National Democratic Party

The National Democratic Party, as we have pointed out previously, has, since its creation by Sadat in 1978, systematically occupied no less than three quarters of the seats in the People's Assembly. We have also noted that the NDP, like the previous 'organisations' under Nasser's single party system, was not only created by a President, but was, and continues to be, headed by a President. Another point which should be reiterated here, is that bearing in mind the NDP was created by Sadat to replace Nasser's Arab Socialist Union, the fact remained that the majority of ASU parliamentarians and senior party members swiftly 'converted' to Sadat's new party. In view of these factors, and in particular, in view of the President's pre-eminent position in the political arena, it would be difficult to expect the NDP to differ extensively in terms of autonomy from previous parties that had been created and subsequently eradicated by their respective chairmen in post-1952 Egypt.

That the NDP represented a change in direction in terms of its official ideological stand and the socialist position of past parties, cannot, on its own, be perceived as a fundamental indication of change. In fact, it seems the party does not actually possess a clear ideological stand. The NDP's programme for example, is formally based upon the principles of promoting "democracy, fostering Egypt's affiliation to the Arab world, [and] venerating ... economic liberalisation that encourages private investment".²⁷⁶ However, that the party's official ideological stand is rather vague and open to interpretation does not appear unintentional. As Hinnebusch points out, whilst the party was, by the end of the Sadat era, cleared of left-wing elements and had thus become established "firmly to the centre-right", the fact that the official programme was vague meant the party would be able to "accommodate a fairly heterogeneous spectrum of political attitudes".²⁷⁷ Equally important perhaps, is that the absence of a rigid and confining ideology means on a more symbolic level, the party can support virtually any policy decisions the President and his government pursues without it appearing as an overt compromise to its 'official' standing.

Organisational structure: an overview

To judge from NDP's overwhelming majority in the Egyptian legislature, it is logical to assume the party constitutes an intense and complex organisation. In reality however, the 'ruling' party appears to be structured along very simplistic lines. In terms of financial resources for example, the NDP officially controls only £E20 million in capital. This sum was raised by Sadat in 1978 from four main sources. The National Bank, Banque Misr and the Bank of Alexandria contributed a quarter of the amount respectively. The final quarter of this amount was donated by a few private party subscribers, probably eager to

²⁷⁶ Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

²⁷⁷ R. A. Hinnebusch, Jr., 1981, P161.

illustrate their support of the president and his new party. At the same time, Sadat also established the National Development Bank (NDB).

The purpose of the bank was, and continues to be, primarily for investing the secured £E20 million capital and using the proceeds to finance the NDP and its development projects. In addition to its bulk capital, the party is also formally subsidised by an annual amount of approximately £E250,000 from the sale of its official publications including its daily newspaper *Mayo*. The party's final source of official income is an annual grant of £E100,000 obtained from the Consultative Council- an amount distributed by the Council to all registered political parties in Egypt.²⁷⁸ As such income suggests, the NDP, as Egypt's dominant party, controls a very limited amount of direct funds. Yet one can argue that this is reflective of the President's attempts to ensure it does not develop into an autonomous and thus potentially challenging entity.

The President's efforts to control the NDP is also reflected in the nature of party leadership. Mubarak, upon assuming the chairmanship of the three year old party, ensured that certain individuals were promptly expelled from membership. The individuals in question included NDP deputies such as Rashad Othman, Mustafa Khalil and Mahmud Solayman. Described as a breed of "parasitic bourgeoisie"²⁷⁹, such individuals were initially encouraged by Sadat to join his new party. The late President, it would seem, intended for them to constitute the foundation of the party. Indicative of this is the fact Sadat allowed

²⁷⁸ Information derived from personal interviews of NDP members, Cairo, 1994-5 and also; *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 12-18 October 1995.

²⁷⁹ The term "parasitic bourgeoisie" is used by Springborg to describe a wide range of individuals whose common ground is that they profit "principally through the subversion of the state and the conversion of its resources into private wealth", R. Springborg, 1989, P81. As a group, their presence emerged most prominently after Sadat introduced his economic 'open door policy' (*infatih*).

a quarter of the £L20 million capital secured for the NDP in 1978 to be privately donated by one individual.²⁸⁰ That person being 'Othman 'Ahmad 'Othman, the then Minister of reconstruction, father-in-law to one of Sadat's daughters, and as a construction contractor, arguably the richest of Egypt's parasitic bourgeoisie.

It should be noted however that 'Othman published a controversial book on Nasser in 1980. The result of which caused public outcry, forcing Sadat, shortly before his assassination, to remove 'Othman from the reconstruction Ministry. Mubarak, it would appear, thus found a suitable pretext with which to ease 'Othman out of the party. Those closely connected with 'Othman also appear to have experienced a similar fate. Illustrative of this was the predicament of Mustafa Khalil, a senior party leader when Mubarak came to power. Khalil's close association with Sadat and 'Othman, as Springborg notes, resulted in him being "jettisoned a year [after Mubarak came to power] and replaced by Fuad Muhyi al-Din, who was independent of Osman".²⁸¹

The potential influence of lesser 'parasitic bourgeoisie' within the party was also swiftly curtailed. Under the pretext that the new President would not tolerate "hypocrisy, corruption, or trading with the livelihood of the people"²⁸², the most discernible tactic employed almost immediately after Mubarak assumed the Presidency, was the removal of a number of these individuals from the Assembly and thus the party on corruption charges. In December 1981 for example, Rashad 'Othman, who was at the time the NDP's deputy for Alexandria, was stripped of Assembly immunity and party membership to face charges for illegal profiteering of timber sales. Mahmud Solayman, the NDP's

²⁸⁰ Financial donations quoted from Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 Oct. 1995.

²⁸¹ R. Springborg, 1989, P158.

²⁸² BBC SWB, 15 October 1981: ME/6854/A/18.

deputy for the electoral constituency of Rosetta also encountered a similar fate when he found himself abandoned by the party he represented to face charges of drug-trafficking. NDP deputy for Kom 'Ombo, Salah 'Abu al-Majd, constitutes yet another example of the "parasitic bourgeoisie" whom Mubarak managed to eradicate from the party shortly after coming to power. In this instance, on charges for trading in state land.²⁸³

If the NDP had been established for a longer period of time prior to Mubarak assuming the presidency, it is doubtful that the removal of individuals such as these would have been as straightforward an affair. This is based on the assumption that had these multi-millionaires been party members for a longer period than just the three years before Mubarak came to power, it is likely they would have had more opportunity to build within the party a clientelist base of support. Whilst such clientelist networks do not necessarily denote protection against Presidential aversion, one can argue that with such a base of support, it would have been difficult to implicate one individual without implicating many others within the party. A similar predicament for example, was faced by Sadat when he attempted to prevent ASU leader, 'Ali Sabri and his shilla, from using the ASU as an instrument of mobilisation and control. Indeed, Sabri was unable to use the ASU for such purpose due to the "chain of command [being] weakened by the defection of *apparatcheki* who stayed loyal to Sadat."²⁸⁴ Yet the clientelist base of support which Sabri had cultivated over the years, meant that by removing Sabri, Sadat also had to remove Sabri's allies within the party. This, in the final analysis, was a major factor which contributed towards the eventual dismantling of the ASU.

²⁸³ Al-Sha'b, 18 May 1981; Al-Ahram, 22 May 1981.

²⁸⁴ R. A. Hinnebusch, Jr., 1988, P44.

Perhaps not wishing to witness a repeat of such events, Mubarak's swift move against the most discernible of these 'parasitic bourgeoisie' appears to show the new President had little intention of allowing them to become too embedded in the party so as to have the opportunity to build a clientelist power-base which could potentially challenge his personal grip on the party. On another level, it is also worth viewing such a tactic as a warning to other party members that escaped Mubarak's minor round-up, but who, prior to this may have harnessed grandeur expectations of their role within the party.

Mubarak's efforts to prevent the emergence of powerful and thus potentially challenging leaders within the NDP, is further reflected in the fact that all senior posts within the party continue to be presidentially appointed. This includes the thirteen seats that comprise the party's Politburo, the twenty-three positions which constitute the party's General Secretariat, and the fifteen chairman posts that overlook the party's fifteen Standing Committees. That such appointments allow the President to maintain centralised control over the party and ensure its senior members do not emerge as independent leaders and thus potential challengers to power, is reflected, as we discussed in the previous chapter, in the type of people he appoints.

Legislative elections and the NDP: an overview

In the absence of a compelling ideology, autonomous access to resources, or even independent party leaders, the NDP appears to depend upon its links to the President as its major source of propaganda. During the period leading up to the 1995 legislative elections for example, the official NDP posters we saw located around Cairo and in the buildings where we attended formal gatherings of NDP candidates all depicted enlarged photographs of President Mubarak waving (as though to the nation), and the party's name al-Hezb al-Watani al-Dimograti, written simply at the bottom of the poster. The message which seems to emerge

from the party's official poster is that by supporting the NDP, one is being 'nationalistic' and supporting the President.

NDP candidates on an individual level, when officially referring to the party they represent, also seem to focus primarily on the Presidential link. In particular, by stressing to the voters how grateful they should be for such an 'association' and the 'privileges' which are derived as a result. Illustrative of this type of attitude for example, was evident during a formal NDP gathering we attended for the public sector workers of the industrial governorate of Helwan wa al- Tibbin. The four NDP candidates for the governorate's two electoral constituencies were in attendance, two of whom were cabinet ministers. The Minister of Religious Endowments, Dr Muhammad Mahjub, and the Minister of War Productions, General Muhammad al-Ghamrawi. The guest speakers comprised various senior NDP members including the Minister of Public Enterprise, Dr 'Atef 'Obayd, and the Governor of Cairo, General 'Omar 'Abd al-'Akhar.

Whilst these prominent individuals were attending in the official role of senior representatives of the NDP, this aspect seemed to be overlooked when Mahjub introduced them in the following words: "Today, President Hosni Mubarak has sent his men to Helwan. This is because Helwan is an important part of Egypt. It is the production centre of Egypt... We thank the President and we thank our prominent guests for coming."²⁸⁵ The address of the Governor of Cairo, 'Omar 'Abd al-'Akhar, seemed even more direct:

"...Yes the problems of Helwan continue to exist... what I say is that problems exist everywhere, all the time in life. This is what life is all about. However in the last four years, the NDP has already spent 600 millions pounds on Helwan wa al-Tibbin areas alone. Therefore I think that the

²⁸⁵ NDP gathering for industrial workers, held at the Helwan Youth Club, 25 November 1995, Cairo.

government and the NDP deserve your respect and gratitude for what has been done for you."²⁸⁶

During a similar gathering held for the two NDP contestants in the electoral constituency of Nozha wa 'Almazza, the same type of tone can be detected. The veteran of the two candidates, Dr Hamdi Al-Sayyed for example, thanked the prominent party speakers for their attendance. In particular, he thanked Deputy Governor of Cairo, General 'Ahmad Hasan Al-Jawahirgi, whom, he told the audience "refused an invitation to a five star hotel with the ambassador of Oman. He refused a five star meal and five star entertainment to come to you."²⁸⁷ That the audience, who consisted primarily of factory workers on the outskirts of Heliopolis, and whose problems included the absence of electricity in their homes, should be 'grateful' for the Deputy Governor's 'sacrifice', appears rather condescending. Yet, this type of attitude illustrates how NDP candidates have little alternative but to focus upon the significance of being linked to the most senior members of the state apparatus. Especially when such links eventually lead to the patronage of the President. As Al-Sayyed concluded to the audience in his address:

"You must remember that *maslahatakum fe hezb al-hokuma, al Hezb al-Watani*. (your interest lies in the government party, NDP) You must also remember that *al-Dawla* (the state) is not stingy, it helps you. It does everything it can for you and you must not forget that. Finally, I will not forget, and you must not forget, that the NDP, headed by President Mubarak, has paid for all your services."²⁸⁸

That one can detect in senior party members a lack of commitment to the party as an autonomous entity, is further reinforced in private interviews. Muhammad Al-Sayyed, an

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Electoral gathering for NDP candidates Dr Hamdi Al-Sayyed and Muhammad Rajab, held at Markaz Al-Sha'b, Hike Step, Nozha, 18 November 1995, Cairo.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

NDP member of the Assembly for the urban constituency of Hada'iq al-Qobba since 1990, summarised his views on the significance of his party's position as follows:

"The NDP is good. But I am not talking about ideology or anything like that. This is not important. I do not think any of us [NDP deputies] care about that. What I mean is that it provides access to the services needed by the people. This is because it is the President's party. I or anybody else in the NDP would join any party that is in the NDP's position. This is because it would be able to provide the necessary services to the constituents."²⁸⁹

It is worth noting that the political analysts and academics whom we interviewed also portrayed little hesitation in stressing the NDP's deficiencies as a party. As Wahid 'Abd Majid, an editor at Al-Ahram's Centre for Political and Strategic Studies, noted:

"One cannot talk of a political agenda when referring to the NDP. It is evident from general elections that its overall political agenda is weak. That is why the party resorts to provincial style politics."²⁹⁰

Indeed, the NDP, as a party, appears to depend primarily upon its links to the government when attempting to attract electoral support. This however, is arguably an intentional strategy on the part of government. If the party was an independent entity, it would be difficult for elections to function either as propaganda tool for the regime or as a clientelist mechanism of recruitment to link those on the periphery to the centre. In fact, it would be difficult for elections to function in such a manner if the government's hold over the party did not extend to an input in the selection of candidates. This is because if elections are to perform its intended functions, then it is necessary not only to ensure the party does not emerge as an independent

²⁸⁹ Personal interview, 26 November 1995, Cairo.

²⁹⁰ Personal interview, 29 December 1994, Cairo.

entity, but also that 'suitable' candidates can be selected for the party.

Electoral candidates for the NDP

Formally, NDP members who aspire to reach legislative office are required to submit an application for nomination to the party's local secretariat- of which there is one in each of Egypt's twenty-six governates. The local secretariat is subsequently expected to pass all the applications along with his personal recommendations to the party's headquarters in Cairo. Prior to the President's final decision, the applications are first short-listed. This is done under the supervision of the party's secretary-general and assistant secretary-general. Formally, the short-list is determined on the basis of the individual merit of each applicant. According to the NDP's assistant-secretary general, Kamal Al-Shazli, for example: "members of the outgoing Assembly who are running for re-election [are] chosen on the basis of their record - the services they extended to their constituents, and more importantly, their effective participation in parliamentary debates and the legislative process."²⁹¹ In case of new applicants, Al-Shazli maintains that: "the criteria for choosing NDP candidates are a good reputation, hard work and commitment to the party."²⁹²

The mechanism of electoral candidates being chosen by a few senior party members headed by the President, in his capacity as party chairman, is indicative the centre's attempts to maintain overall control of the party's internal dynamics. Realistically therefore, it would be difficult for the centre to maintain control over the party if potential candidates actually showed signs of intending to pursue effective legislative participation and commitment to the party as an autonomous political organisation. This is why in reality, electoral nominations

²⁹¹ Interview in Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

²⁹² Interview in Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

appear to be determined upon informal factors that relate more to the personal status rather than the ideological position of an individual. Put differently, it seems that NDP electoral candidates are nominated, not on the basis of dedication to the party, hard work, political capability or the like. But on whether a person, on the basis of his personal influence and social networks within the community, merit co-optation into the system. As one veteran NDP deputy explains:

"The NDP depends on choosing people who have a good local reputation. Sometimes that person with a good local reputation might not be the best man for the job. But he is usually the most popular person with a lot of family support and recognition from the local people."²⁹³

Illustrative of such individuals is Hamdi Fayṣal Al-Sharqawī, incumbent NDP deputy for the constituency of Naḥṭay.

A standard NDP recruit: Hamdi Al-Sharqawī²⁹⁴

The population of Naḥṭay, according to Al-Sharqawī, comprise approximately half a million people, most of whom work in the production and commerce of agriculture. Moreover, Naḥṭay, which is situated in the governorate of Gharbeyya, is typical of predominantly rural Egypt in that it lacks sufficient infra-structure and services such as electricity, water supplies, paved roads and schools. The local peasant population therefore, is inclined to turn to the established or 'notable' families in the community for various forms of assistance and favours. Al-Sharqawī, who originates from an established middle range land owning family,²⁹⁵ is, in his own right, a successful businessman trading in agricultural related equipment. In addition, Al-

²⁹³ Personal interview, Hamdi Al-Sayyed, 1 January 1995.

²⁹⁴ The material for this example is based on personal interviews conducted with Al-Sharqawī and his brother 'Almad, during visits to the People's Assembly, Cairo, 3 and 4 January 1995.

²⁹⁵ In our view middle range landowners are those whose overall agricultural land holding is between 20 and 100 feddans.

Sharqawi holds a Ph.D. in engineering and as a result, also lectures at the local state-owned university.

Amongst the predominantly peasant inhabitants of Nahtay, Al-Sharqawi's stature was not unnoticed. Aware that someone of his position would have better connections and access to the authorities than they, the locals sought Al-Sharqawi's assistance in both personal and communal matters. It became a matter of routine for example, for Al-Sharqawi to bail out locals held in custody.²⁹⁶ On a more communal level, he would be approached by locals including village headmen (*'omdas*), to intervene on their behalf with the authorities in matters for example, concerning the construction of a local school and medical centre.

The electoral law amendments implemented prior to the 1984 legislative elections contributed, according to Al-Sharqawi, in a dramatic rise in the number of locals requiring his assistance. This, it seems, was because the electoral law amendments (which will be discussed later in the chapter) resulted in large areas being represented by individuals with whom the locals were unfamiliar. Consequently, rather than approach these parliamentary representatives directly, each community became ever more dependent upon prominent locals such as Al-Sharqawi to act as an intermediate between themselves and these strangers who had come to be their parliamentary representatives. Hence, in the period between the electoral law amendments being implemented, in 1984, and when election rules reverted to the original system, in 1990, Al-Sharqawi was no longer regarded simply as a prominent member of the community. Rather, his expanded involvement in local welfare, meant, intentionally or not, he had developed an admirable reputation within the area and hence extensive personal networks.

²⁹⁶ Apart from minor crimes such as household or livestock theft, Egyptian peasants tend to find themselves in police custody when, for example, physical fights over water distribution in respective agricultural plots results in some serious injuries.

It should also be noted that, when the electoral system reverted to the original style of individual candidacy in 1990, and the number of electoral constituencies expanded again, this time from forty eight to two hundred and twenty two, the area of Nahtay became in itself, an independent electoral constituency. Al-Sharqawi, probably accustomed to his prestigious role as an intermediate between the locals and the authorities, was undoubtedly aware that the decrease in the size of electoral constituencies would also affect his role. The decrease in the size of electoral constituencies logically increases the possibility of the locals being familiar with their Assembly representatives. This in turn, increases the chances the representatives would be sought directly in times of need.

Al-Sharqawi was therefore aware that the extensive personal networks cultivated over the years in the area of Nahtay, would most probably diminish with the re-introduction of smaller sized electoral constituencies. And in such an event, a future application to be placed on the NDP electoral list, would have a lesser chance of being accepted. It seems that Al-Sharqawi thus decided it was in his interest to seek NDP nomination whilst his personal base of support in the area of Nahtay was at its peak. That the NDP swiftly accepted Al-Sharqawi's application, is thus a strong indication that such an assumption was not erroneous.

This brings us to the reason a prominent local such as Al-Sharqawi wanted to enter elections as an NDP candidate. Acknowledging he had no previous history of party activity and had formally applied for party membership only shortly before seeking electoral nomination, Al-Sharqawi's response was because he felt he could: "help more people as a deputy, than as someone asking favours from deputies."²⁹⁷ As, this response appears to suggest, Al-Sharqawi had

²⁹⁷ Personal Interview, 3 January 1995, Cairo.

little illusion about what election to the Assembly will confer on an individual in his position. Election to the Assembly as an NDP member, as he was apparently aware, would provide him with direct access to resources that will assist him to maintain his eminent position within the community. His role is subsequently to act as a link between his community and government, not to be a legislator. As he put it: "how can I criticise government policy and then ask them the next day to fund a new school in my constituency?"²⁹⁸

The above example is intended to illustrate the exchange which elections appear to define in the middle level of the clientelist chain. That is, Al-Sharqawi through elections, and hence his subsequent access to governmental resources, was able to maintain and perhaps expand his prestige and influence in his local community. In exchange, it seems he was aware and willing to support the government. This support appeared to imply overlooking the checks and scrutiny of government policy, which his role as legislator formally entails. It also meant that on the parochial level, the channelling of state resources to his constituency, he was reinforcing the clientelist ties that link those in the centre of power to those on the grass roots.

That elections can define the role of NDP deputies on such terms, appears therefore dependent on two important factors. First, that a candidate is of sufficient prominence within his community, so that his co-option into the clientelist chain would be advantageous to the regime. Advantageous in that he would also, theoretically, channel his supporters and personal contacts into the clientelist chain. The second important factor is that a candidate's personal economic resources are not sufficient to undermine his dependence upon state resources. This is because if the status of a local notable flowed not only from his social

²⁹⁸ Personal Interview, 3 January 1995, Cairo.

standing and prestige, but also from extensive personal wealth, then it would be difficult to ensure that elections would define the role of NDP deputies in the manner discussed above. The following example is intended to clarify this point.

The effects of economic independence on the role of elections: the case of Ibrahim Kamel

Ibrahim Mustafa Kamel, a millionaire businessman and former member of the NDP.²⁹⁹ Kamel, who was running for re-election in the 1995 legislative elections as an Independent candidate in the constituency of Menufeyya, first entered the People's Assembly in 1990. Since graduating from university, Kamel lived abroad until 1988. First in Paris, then in New York where he studied a business course. Thereafter, Kamel resided in Switzerland where, in collaboration with Saudi and other Gulf rulers, he built an Islamic based financial empire, with the largest of his companies being Dar al-Mal al-'Islami. On his return to Egypt, Kamel, along with his brothers began to venture into business investments in Menufeyya. Investments such as the construction of seven clothes factories, which alone, employ two thousand people. Kamel's vast wealth also appears to have been rather useful in allowing him to build an extensive local base of support. Constructing a local Zakat³⁰⁰ fund in 1990, Kamel maintains that through this fund, he has managed, amongst other things, to provide medical assistance for 50,000 people, finance the repair and modernisation of several hundred local schools and mosques and, finance the construction and maintenance of five preparatory schools.

²⁹⁹ Information on Kamel's history derived from an extensive profile by James Exelby, "Independent Delta Force", in Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

³⁰⁰ Zakat constitutes one of the five pillars of Islam. It is based upon the principal that Muslims should donate at least one percent of annual income to charity.

It should be noted however that constructing in Menufeyya an extensive base of support in what appears to be such a relatively short period of time, was not simply the consequence of Kamel's vast wealth and subsequent charitable contributions. Rather, Kamel belongs to a prominent family whose origins in the area date back centuries. One of the local schools was in fact, the family home. However it was confiscated during Nasser's social reforms. What this means, is that Kamel was neither a stranger nor an outsider to the area. His personal and family links within the community were already established prior to his emigration. Hence, by investing part of the fortune accumulated abroad into his place of origins, Kamel appears to have simply strengthened and expanded personal networks that already existed.

It is not too suprising therefore, that a person of Kamel's stature and extensive local networks appeared a highly suitable electoral candidate for the NDP. It is perhaps for this reason that the Governor of Menufeyya actually approached Kamel to enquire whether he was interested in participating in the 1990 legislative elections. Kamel was indeed interested, and to the apparent good fortune of the NDP, he saw no objection in contesting the seat as the party's formal candidate.

That Kamel won the seat was subsequently not unexpected. What was rather unexpected however, was that Kamel, as a member of both the NDP and People's Assembly, began to show signs of active legislative and party participation. As an international businessman, his views were particularly evident in legislative matters concerning the economy. The four decades in which the state has maintained control of the economy for example, meant that from his perspective, genuine economic reform would not be possible unless President Mubarak first took: "his big red pen to the 40,000 odd laws passed in the last forty years. Then we'll

know ^hwere we are."³⁰¹ Regarding the party's organisational structure, Kamel also made his dissatisfaction clear. His bone of contention focused in particular on the fact that the party was internally structured along the lines of appointment, rather than voting. The consequence of which led to his expulsion from the party after only two years of membership.

What the above case shows is that Kamel's prominent position in the Menufeyya area initially rendered him a potential asset to the President's NDP. He was therefore swiftly approached by the party. Yet Kamel, it is not erroneous to contend, differs from the majority of other local people of prominence and influence in Egypt, not only in the enormity of his fortune, but also because such a fortune is not directly tied to Egypt. What this means is that Kamel was, to a large extent, able to maintain his influential position within Menufeyya with relative independence from the authorities. This, as we mentioned above, is because a proportion of his vast wealth is sufficient to look after the employment and welfare of a large number of locals.

Moreover, the fact that his primary assets and investments were located in Switzerland, meant his livelihood was not subject to government interference. This, in turn, further reinforced his independence. He thus appeared unwilling to surrender active political participation as a legislator in return for state resources which would not necessarily elevate his parochial power and influence any more than existed. What this shows therefore, is that extensive economic resources in personal hands hinders elections from being utilised to co-opt and control the participation of local notables who possess political aspirations.

³⁰¹ Cit. in James Exelby, "Independent Delta Force", P14, in Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

It should be noted however that the Kamel case constitutes the exception rather than the norm in this respect. This is because majority of NDP members who reach public office cannot lay claim to the type of economic independence exercised by Kamel. Indeed, the NDP appears to focus upon the social standing, influence and prestige of those it attempts to co-opt through elections. Yet the large majority cannot, in terms of personal wealth, be compared to an international financier such as Kamel. What this means is that whilst their local prominence might assist the regime in terms of linking it to the mass majority, economic constraints virtually ensures such individuals are willing, sometimes eager, to enter the clientelist chain of elections.

This, as we will discuss in the following chapter, is largely linked to the absence of genuine multi-party competition. An absence which appears to have been affirmed the majority of Egyptians who judge their parliamentary representatives on the basis of the services and goods provided, both on an individual and parochial level. Yet for now, the point of concern is that in the overwhelming majority of cases, providing such goods is not only dependent upon subordination to government, but also on NDP membership. This in turn, appears to produce advantageous consequences for the regime. The most prominent of which is the undermining of group cohesion within the party. The following example depicts an interesting situation that occurred during the 1990 legislative elections which illustrates this point.

Elections and Intra-Party Competition

The case involves Hamdi Al-Sayyed, a prominent heart surgeon, Head of the Doctors syndicate in Egypt, and a member of the NDP since its creation in 1978.³⁰² Hamdi Al-Sayyed entered the People's Assembly for the first time in

³⁰² Information regarding this case was derived primarily from personal interviews with Hamdi Al-Sayyed, 27 December 1994, 1 and 2 January 1995 and; Muhammad Fahmi, 18 November 1995.

1979. He had joined the NDP and subsequently the People's Assembly as a result of Sadat's personal encouragement. According to Al-Sayyed, this was because the President had, at the time, wanted to attract professionals from diverse fields into his newly constructed political forum. Hence, whilst visiting the headquarters of the Doctors syndicate and meeting its new head, al-Sayyed, Sadat "was impressed by the way we conducted our affairs and decided I would be a useful addition in parliament."³⁰³

Al-Sayyed thus came to fill one of the seats for the constituency of Nozha wa Almaza, and continued to do so after Sadat's death in both the election of 1984 and 1987. The two million inhabitants of Nozha wa Almaza constitute diverse groups of people including labourers connected to public sector factories, unplanned settlers on the outskirts, and wealthy middle and upper class people residing in urban areas such as the neighbourhood inhabited by Al-Sayyed and his immediate family.

Between 1979 and 1990, Al-Sayyed main preoccupation in the constituency had been the problems encountered by inhabitants of the poorer areas. Maintaining an open office twice a week, the inhabitants of Nozha wa Almaza were provided with direct access to their parliamentary representative. Factory workers, unplanned settlers, and other individuals routinely turned up to ask for his assistance or enquire about the progress of their latest concern. During our presence at one of these open days for example, a couple of workers had been sent by their colleagues to enquire when the electricity supply would be connected to their new homes. Homes which coincidentally were situated within the precincts of their factories in an isolated desert area a few miles from Cairo airport. Al-Sayyed responded by assuring them he had information from the Ministry of Electricity that the power supply would be in working order by the end of the week. Another person, a

³⁰³ Personal interview, Hamdi Al-Sayyed, 27 December 1994, Cairo.

young handicapped man, had as a result of Al-Sayyed's intervention managed to obtain a free public transport travel pass. On that particular day, he had come not only to thank his parliamentary representative, but also to ask for a note of reference to present to a potential employer. Al-Sayyed promptly obliged. By one o'clock the following morning, Al-Sayyed, with the help of his assistant, had seen at least forty people regarding individual or parochial problems of such nature.³⁰⁴

Our point at present however, is not the nature of assistance that the constituents receive from their representative, but that constituents, as a result of the routine surgery, had direct access to Al-Sayyed on a regular basis. This in itself is not a common phenomenon. For a start, unlike Al-Sayyed whose constituency is based on the suburbs of Cairo, the majority of deputies represent distant constituencies, yet are based in Cairo during the parliamentary season. Therefore they cannot meet personally with constituents on such a regular basis.

Such accessibility logically expanded Al-Sayyed's personal networks within the constituency as locals and their leaders became personally acquainted with him. This, one can argue was an important accomplishment considering that Al-Sayyed was not himself a local man. Rather, Al-Sayyed originates from rural Egypt, studied post-graduate medicine in Britain and subsequently resided there until the mid-seventies. He therefore had few previous personal relations within his adopted constituency prior to representing it in 1979 in the People's Assembly. In retrospect, it is difficult to imagine that Al-Sayyed, could have won his parliamentary seat in 1979 if the encouragement and 'support' of Sadat had been absent. Yet the point is that whilst Sadat may have arguably 'imposed' Al-Sayyed upon the constituency of Nozha wa Almaza initially, in an effort to

³⁰⁴ Personal observation at Al-Sayyed's constituency office, 2 January 1995, Cairo.

establish the NDP and a few of its new members in the political arena, Al-Sayyed, through his accessibility and work for the constituents, managed to gain, in his own right, their respect and support. In doing so, one can argue this also reflected well on the NDP since it showed the party comprised individuals of high calibre.

It was not simply the relationship Al-Sayyed built with his constituents that appears to have rendered him an asset to the party. Rather, Al-Sayyed, since entering the legislature, has been active in other roles such as serving on the Health Committee, one of eighteen Minister chaired committees that discuss legislation before it is proposed to parliament. To reach such a position is itself indicative of the extent to which Al-Sayyed occupied a senior status within party ranks. The personal contacts he told us he maintains with Ministers and President Mubarak himself, is also reflective of this assumption. Furthermore, verification of this claim was possible during one of our first meetings with him. He received a phone call which, to judge from his tone of voice, and his use of the word "ya fandem" (sir), when addressing the caller, indicated that he was talking to someone of even higher authority than himself. The assumption was reinforced when Al-Sayyed presented his view on a current political issue and asked the caller to reconsider the matter in question since it was likely to provoke more trouble than it was worth.³⁰⁵

What we have been attempting to emphasize therefore, is that Al-Sayyed, on the basis his long-standing membership of the NDP, his active participation on its behalf both inside the

³⁰⁵ Conversation overheard (and briefly commented upon with al-Sayyed) during personal interview on 1 January 1995. Al-Sayyed was in fact referring to the then current detention of Adel Husayn on alleged charges of distributing anti-government literature abroad. As editor-in-chief of Al-Sha'b, Husayn's arrest received front page coverage in the national newspapers and the apparent injustice of the charge resulted in the journalist syndicate publicly backing the accused. The charges were subsequently dropped a few weeks later.

legislature and outside in his constituency, his regular interaction with members of the Presidential inner circle, all suggest him to be an established member of the party. Hence, it seems curious, at least on surface, that Al-Sayyed's attempt to seek his party's re-nomination for the legislative elections of 1990 was rejected. The formal reason as expressed to him, was that the party had simply "decided against nominating an official candidate" to compete in the constituency of Nozha wa Almaza.³⁰⁶ That the NDP refused to nominate a formal candidate in one of Egypt's largest constituencies even though one of its most capable and prominent members had successfully represented it for over a decade, and was evidently intent on re-nomination, indicates the party's justification as feeble.

Indeed it does appear a feeble justification, because in reality it seems the party's refusal to nominate its veteran member appears to have been linked to the fact that another prominent resident of the constituency had decided to contest Al-Sayyed's seat. The resident in question, Badri Al-Din Khattab was a lecturer at the University of Cairo. In addition, he was also a very wealthy businessman with a number of commercial investments such as shops and restaurants situated in the constituency. It would appear that Khattab, on the basis of his status and business activities, managed to develop a popular base of support amongst the locals in the area. It is alleged for example, that Khattab's restaurants are known to regularly donate substantial quantities of food to the impoverished citizens of the district and due to his extensive commercial activities, he was also a large employer in the area.³⁰⁷ In addition, one would assume that as a highly educated member of the community, it is likely the less educated locals regularly approached him, as in the case of Al-Sharqawi in Nahtay, for assistance in situations concerning themselves

³⁰⁶ Personal interview, 27 January 1997.

³⁰⁷ Information on Khattab was derived from Al-Sayyed's assistants during the 1995 electoral campaign.

and the authorities. It should be noted after all, that due to the electoral law amendments which were imposed between 1984 and 1990, Al-Sayyed's constituency had expanded in size to the extent it encompassed what were, and since 1990, reverted again to be, separate electoral constituencies for the areas of Madinat Nasr and Heliopolis.

What this means is that Al-Sayyed became one of six representatives in this enormous constituency, and although his regular surgeries rendered him accessible to constituents who sought his assistance, it is conceivable that the sheer number of demands on his time compelled locals in the relatively distant areas to seek alternative assistance from prominent locals such as Khattab. In this respect, it seems the enormous size of the constituency between 1984 and 1990, may also to a certain degree, have been advantageous to Khattab in that it allowed him the opportunity to further expand his personal networks within the area of Nozha wa Almaza. Whilst Al-Sayyed on the other hand was busy attempting to meet the additional and diffuse demands entailed from the annex of Madinat Nasr and Heliopolis. That Al-Sayyed did not approve of the electoral law amendments of that period appears to verify this presumption.³⁰⁸

The refusal of the NDP to nominate an official candidate for Al-Sayyed's legislative seat subsequently resulted in Al-Sayyed, Khattab, and other less prominent individuals in the constituency all competing with each other as independents. The official results as confirmed by the Ministry of Interior declared Khattab the winner and he

³⁰⁸ Al-Sayyed claimed his disapproval of the electoral law amendments was because he saw it as "unfair to the smaller opposition parties and Independents." Personal interview, 27 December 1994, Cairo. However, considering that during that period, he represented neither category, his opinion, genuine as it appeared, may have also been influenced by the huge expansion in constituency size. An expansion which was arguably debilitating his energy focus and perhaps diffusing his personal networks which he had previously constructed in the community.

subsequently entered the People's Assembly as a member of the NDP. Al-Sayyed however, suspicious of Khattab's victory, and without the NDP's consent, took the matter to the Court of Cassation. Whilst Khattab's popularity in the community was not in question, Al-Sayyed felt the total amount of votes for Khattab was too great to be considered genuine. In fact, Al-Sayyed believed the results had been manipulated because Khattab allegedly "bribed the chief of the election committee."³⁰⁹ In court, the judge decided upon an administrative error verdict, since in his opinion, the signatures of those who registered to vote in the constituency were unclear. The result was a court order for re-election. Al-Sayyed won, and hence re-took his seat in the Assembly in August 1991, registering as an NDP member. Perhaps not wishing to witness a repeat occurrence of the 1990 events, the NDP chose to officially nominate Al-Sayyed as its candidate in the legislative elections of 1995.

The rivalry between the two party members did not however end with Al-Sayyed's official nomination in 1995. Rather, Khattab decided to register as an independent contestant, presumably with the intention of registering as an NDP if he won the Assembly seat. Attempting to lure Al-Sayyed's supporters in the constituency, Khattab resorted to various campaign techniques. The most highly publicised was offering voters free meals in his restaurants in the month leading up to the elections.

Whilst Al-Sayyed won yet again, the implications of such rivalry is not insignificant. On the individual level, such type of competition between members of the same party does little to enhance their loyalty to the party as an organisation. It is evident for example, that the party, or to be more accurate, those appointed by the President to run it, were aware of Al-Sayyed's admirable capabilities in the Assembly and whilst serving on legislative committees. What they were not sure about was whether Al-Sayyed or

³⁰⁹ Personal interview, Hamdi Al-Sayyed, 27 December 1994.

Khattab possessed a more extensive network of support within the constituency. Hence, by not formally nominating a candidate during the elections of 1990, it would appear the party wanted to leave its options open with the aim of embracing the winner into its sphere, once the seat was filled. Such a strategy means that logically, party candidates are not left with feelings of obligation or pressure to support each other. The post-election court battle between Al-Sayyed and Khattab illustrates this well.

In view of the above, party membership cannot be viewed as binding in the categorical sense. Individual candidates are tied to the party because their personal base of support appears conditional upon the downward flow of resources. Resources which candidates aim to receive through party membership. Yet because of prevailing (and not discouraged) intra-party competition, party membership appears structured upon various individual candidates and their personal followings. This, one would argue, is advantageous for the government because the implications are that individual candidates are preoccupied with the effort of safeguarding their own careers, which in turn is based upon safeguarding their personal network of supporters. What this means is that the NDP candidates are less likely to be concerned with party programmes and policies not only during electoral campaigns, but also once elected to office. Thus allowing the government even more freedom in such matters. This, in the final analysis, appears to reaffirm the clientelist role of elections.

3.3 The Opposition Parties and Elections

The role of elections as a clientelist mechanism of recruitment and control appears, under Mubarak's rule, also a strategy intended to incorporate political opponents. This strategy is arguably viable because the constraints imposed on opposition parties are not too dissimilar from the constraints imposed upon the President's own party. Whilst certain opposition parties for example, hold more distinctive ideological stands than the NDP, the fact

remains that such ideologies are rendered almost futile if not simply for the fact that the imposed state of emergency prevents the widespread promotion of such views.³¹⁰

As in the case of the NDP, financial constraints are imposed in apparent efforts to ensure opposition resources do not pose a potential challenge to the regime. It is illegal for example, for political parties to accept donations or funding from foreign institutions or individuals. If a donation from an Egyptian individual or organisation exceeds two thousand Egyptian pounds, the party in question is obliged by law to print notification of the exact contribution and details of the contributor in its newspaper. This legality, as 'Abd Al-'Aziz Zayyan of the Neo-Wafd noted: "might encourage private donations to the NDP because the donors have nothing to fear and much to gain by publicly pledging support to the President's party. But what businessman would want that sort of publicity for financing the opposition? He will find his business faced with a lot of bureaucratic hassle the next day."³¹¹

It is of course difficult to assess the extent of private donations received by political parties in Egypt. This is because the parties may use covert methods to avoid the above law. On the formal level for example, opposition parties depend on three formal sources of income. There is the annual £LE100,000 received individually by each registered party from the Shura Council. The membership fees and donations of party members, and finally, the income derived from the sale of party newspapers. On the basis of such income, one would assume that all opposition parties would be on a roughly equal level in terms of economic resources. This however does not appear to be the case.

³¹⁰ Even the Muslim Brotherhood, as we illustrate in the following chapter, depends upon more than its religious ideology to attract electoral support.

³¹¹ Personal Interview, 8 January 1995, Cairo.

The headquarters of the Neo-Wafd for example, is situated in a multi-million pound villa in central Cairo, whilst the Tajammu', whose headquarters is also situated in central Cairo, occupies a run down office. In relative terms however, the economic disparity between all political parties is perhaps not too extensive in view of the government imposed constraints. The difference, one can argue, is largely the fact the NDP is granted more direct (not autonomous) access to government controlled resources than its opposition counterparts.

The point we are attempting to emphasise here, is that the function of elections as an instrument of clientelist recruitment and control for the NDP can logically be extended to opposition parties. The main reason being that the opposition face an even greater level of participatory constraints than the President's party. Hence, the possibility of viewing election to the People's Assembly from a similar perspective as NDP members is viable and can be detected gradually over the periods incorporating the four legislative elections beginning in 1984.

Participating in the legislative elections of 1984

The first legislative elections under Mubarak can be viewed as significant for opposition parties from two perspectives. On one level, the Tajammu', the Liberal Party and the Socialist Labour Party were joined by the Neo-Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood in the electoral arena. The presence of these organisations was not insignificant because both political entities originated in pre-1952 Egypt and more importantly, both maintained considerable support from some sections of the population respectively.

The origins of the Neo-Wafd for example, can be traced back as early as 1919. Between that period and 1952, the Wafd, as it was called then, occupied a dominant role in Egyptian politics and was actually in government shortly before the Free Officers took power. The Muslim Brotherhood on the other hand, has never actually gained formal party status.

Yet it emerged only nine years after the Wafd and also played an important role in Egyptian politics during the first^{part} of this century.
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In terms of ideological platforms and bases of support, these two organisations were, and continue to be, at opposite ends of the spectrum. The Muslim Brotherhood, with its belief in the implementation of an Islamic State ruled by *Shari'a*, has to a large degree, depended upon the links and support of those in the population at lower end of the social scale. In contrast, the Wafd, a champion of free enterprise and political liberalisation, appears to have systematically attracted upper and upper middle class Egyptians into its ranks of support. Formal ideological differences aside however, both organisations had found early support at the grass roots of society as a result of their respective contribution in arousing national awareness, anti-British and anti-Israeli sentiments.

To have been able to reach the masses and subsequently arouse sentiments of this nature, one can argue, is an indicator of the efficient- albeit different, organisational capabilities of both entities. It is therefore not suprising to find that when Sadat decided to allow a formal multi-party arena, two of the stipulations of Law 40 of 1977, the law which continues to govern the formation of political parties, appeared directly aimed at both organisations. One of the stipulations being that political parties cannot be established on a religious basis. The second was that the re-establishment political parties which existed in pre-1952 Egypt was forbidden.³¹²

Initially the Wafd overcame the latter stipulation by amending its pre-1952 platform and changing its name to the

³¹² Information derived from various sources including personal interview with 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, assistant secretary-general of the *Tajammu'* and author of *Al-Tahalufat al-siyasiyya wa al-'amal al-Ishteraki fi Miqr: 1976-1993* (Al-'Ahl Press, Cairo, 1994); 15 January 1996, Cairo.

Neo-Wafd. Yet, the extent to which the Neo-Wafd was still considered a challenge to the regime was further reflected in Sadat's decision to issue, in 1978, a decree forbidding those who held high positions in the pre-1952 regime from holding party membership. The move produced the desired affects. The party decided to freeze its activities in protest at the decree. The reason being that a number of its leaders including its chairman, Fu'ad Seraj Al-Din, held high governmental positions prior to 1952. It was not until the Neo-Wafd resorted to the courts and gained, in 1983, a favourable ruling that it was able to resume its activities and hence legally participate in the then anticipated elections of 1984.

The fact that these potentially challenging groups were both intending to participate in the 1984 legislative elections leads us to the second reason these elections were significant from the perspective of the opposition. Mubarak it would appear, was so apprehensive of the potential outcome of the first legislative elections of his rule that he decided to amend the laws governing electoral competition. The fact the implementation of Electoral Law 114/1983 was influenced by the presence of these two organisations in particular, can be detected from two perspectives. First, because the Muslim Brotherhood did not possess legal party status, it was intending to nominate its candidates under the independent category. This would have been possible under the previous individual candidacy system. Mubarak's new law however revoked this system and replaced it with a system of election by party list. Consequently this meant the Muslim Brotherhood could not resort to that option.

It should also be noted that the party list system also meant the small group of genuine independent candidates who depended upon the support a local power base had to join a political party or abstain from political participation. The implications of both choices were clearly detrimental to these candidates, in particular those with extensive

power bases and previously assured seats. This is because if they chose to abstain, they faced the possibility of losing their influence and status within the local community. However, if they chose to participate, the most assured way they could preserve their place in the Assembly under the new law would be to join the government backed NDP. A move which would ensure their co-option into the party on government terms. Another, less apparent consequence of adopting a party-list system was its role in controlling NDP members. Previously, an NDP member had the alternative option to enter the electoral race as an independent and then re-register as an NDP member upon taking his place in the legislature. The new law however terminated this option. Hence, the implications point at a reinforcement of control over incumbent members of the NDP, as the risk being dropped from the official nomination list would mean an almost certain end to the individual's political career.

Second, with the new electoral law came the reduction of the number of electoral constituencies from 176 to 48. Thus the average province that had previously had some 15-20 constituencies became readjusted to possess only 3-5.³¹³ Moreover, all participating parties were required to obtain a minimum of 8% of the nation-wide total votes to be represented at all in the Peoples Assembly. Should a party not achieve the 8% line, its votes would then be automatically credited to those of the largest party - in other words, the President's NDP.

Mubarak justified the new law by claiming the change was intended to provide voters with the "opportunity to choose among a number of different programmes and methods".³¹⁴ This comment however, could hardly be considered convincing in the context of- as will be discussed in the following

³¹³ See Legislative Elections in Egypt, CHRLA Report, October 1995. Also see: R. Springborg, 1989, PP160-61.

³¹⁴ Middle East Contemporary Survey (MECS), Volume VIII, 1983-4, P357.

chapter- the highly parochial and personalised voting patterns of the population. Rather, the adoption of such measures reflects the President's efforts to limit the electoral participation of parties who depend upon its prominent candidates. Candidates who, by virtue of their local standing and networks, could achieve electoral gains on behalf of their respective parties. The opposition party that was intended to be most affected by this, was arguably the Neo-Wafd.

The above assumption is based on the premise that the Neo-Wafd, unlike its fellow opposition parties, has historically been linked to wealthy and influential members of society. And the fact the party was resurrected by its veteran members on a similar ideological platform to the original, indicated the party would again attract individual members that fit this category. In other words, individual members who would possess favourable prospects of election in their local communities. An example of which is senior Neo-Wafd member, 'Ahmad 'Othman 'Abaza. 'Abaza originates from one of the oldest and most influential families in Egypt's governate of Sharqiyya. Hence, if the Neo-Wafd nominated 'Abaza, by virtue of his family networks and standing in the area, 'Abaza's nomination could have theoretically provided the Neo-Wafd with a legislative representative in that area. However, the expansion of constituencies under the new law meant he would not only have had to compete against other prominent individuals on their local territory and vice-versa. But also, if 'Abaza did manage to surpass his competitors in the elections, the nation-wide 8% minimum required by his party to enter the Assembly could have still barred him from acquiring a seat. In this respect, it is not surprising for one opposition newspaper to declare that:

"The government only wants an opposition with no power so that it can boast to international public opinion and give the people at home the impression that they are being democratically represented in the Assembly... There will never be the chance

of government alternation. The single party will forever rule."³¹⁵

Implications of 1983 electoral law amendments

The extent to which the new electoral system helped to achieve the intended objectives was, in certain perspectives, paradoxical. The 8% hurdle prevented the relatively new and subsequently unchallenging Labour, Liberal and Tajammu' from entering the Assembly. Prominent individuals such a Tajammu' leader Khalid Mohyi al-Din was unable to provide his party with token representation in the Assembly. Even though his personal chances of election were high in view of his local standing and networks in his rural home constituency of Kafr Shokr.³¹⁶ In this respect, by changing the rules for political participation, Mubarak did succeed through what appeared as legal and therefore theoretically legitimate means, in preventing certain sections of the opposition from entering parliament. However, they were not the opponents the President arguably had in mind. 'Ahmad 'Abaza did in fact compete on behalf of the Neo-Wafd in his family's home constituency of Sharqiyya. He also won the seat. Equally important, he was able to take his seat in the legislature because his party surpassed the imposed 8% hurdle. He was subsequently joined in the Assembly by forty-nine fellow Wafdist and eight Muslim Brotherhood members.³¹⁷ The reason for this was that the Neo-Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood overcame the restrictive technicalities of the new law by forming an electoral alliance. An alliance which entailed candidates from both entities competing under the formal Neo-Wafd banner.

³¹⁵ Al-Sha'b, 26 December 1983.

³¹⁶ According to several sources within the Tajammu', the 8% barrier was in fact the impediment preventing Mohyi Al-Din's entry to the Assembly: the party only managed to acquire 4% of nation-wide votes. Sources include personal interviews with Rif'at Sa'id and 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, Nov.-Jan. 1994-5, Cairo.

³¹⁷ Sources include: Members of the People's Assembly Directory, People's Assembly Printing and Publication Dept., Cairo 1985 (in Arabic). Also, personal interview with 'Ali Salama, Deputy Secretary-General of the Neo-Wafd, 8 January 1995, Cairo.

The fact that this alliance overcame the imposed restrictions of the new electoral law is not symbolically insignificant. Rather than weaken potentially threatening opponents, the new law weakened the already fragile smaller opponents, but served to unite and strengthen the regime's two main adversaries.

It should also be noted that the new electoral law produced the unforeseen consequence of strengthening opposition unity from several other perspectives. Ideological differences aside, one such consequence was its role in uniting the opposition's public views on the government. Using their respective newspapers, the opposition parties increasingly condemned the government and its policies. Writing in *Al-Sha'b*, the Labour party's newspaper for example, the secretary-general of the party, Hilmi Murad, conceded what was perhaps apparent for a while, namely that "The Government needs an opposition with no power".³¹⁸ Although the Neo-Wafd went on to achieve relative electoral success in comparison to the other parties, this did not prevent it from calling the election law "an evil scheme intended to attain results contrary the people's views"³¹⁹ and that the government was basically a "legal heir" of the old Nasserite dictatorship because it is restricting democracy and is only prepared to recognise an opposition which was docile.³²⁰

Although the opposition's use of their respective newspapers to criticise the government did reflect the extent to which freedom of expression had expanded in comparison to Nasser and Sadat's rule, it is worth noting that there was perhaps very little Mubarak could do at that particular time without substantiating opposition accusations. And more importantly, without appearing as an

³¹⁸ *Al-Sha'b*, 26 December 1983.

³¹⁹ *Al-Wafd*, 19 April 1984.

³²⁰ *Al-Wafd*, 24 April 1984.

outright oppressor. In other words, in view of both the State of Emergency constraints affecting political activity and the particularly severe electoral barriers instigated prior to the 1984 elections, attempts to prevent the publication of negative newspaper articles would have more likely resulted, not in containing political participation, but in the termination of the main "safety valve" available for opposition participation- short of resorting to underground activity.³²¹

On another level, the restrictive nature of the elections did not appear to act as a catalyst in pressuring the opposition into co-option. It is interesting to note for example, that using Presidential prerogative to appoint ten members into the Assembly, the President nominated several members of the opposition. Ibrahim Shokri, leader of the Labour Party (at this time called Socialist Labour Party) and two other colleagues were amongst the chosen opposition members. So too was Milad Hanna a senior member of the Tajammu'. Dr Hanna refused the offer, a decision that reflected both his and his party's opinion on the matter at the time. Ibrahim Shokri and his colleagues on the other hand, accepted.³²²

The reason one party refused the President's offer, whilst the other accepted, cannot however be regarded a split in opposition decision to co-operate with government. Rather, it can best be understood as a difference in strategy. The Tajammu' refused because it felt that by accepting the offer, it would be sending the wrong signals to government, i.e. that they accept the current political conditions. On

³²¹ To substantiate this point of view, it should be noted that under different circumstances (i.e. the return to the more opposition friendly individual candidacy electoral system) the President did in fact resort to a "penal code amendment". This vaguely worded law (implemented in May 1995) provides the government with a virtual carte blanche to prosecute journalists for defamation or spreading "false information". Penalties include heavy fines and up to five years imprisonment. See previous chapter.

³²² Personal interview, 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, 27 December 1995.

the other hand, it would appear the Labour party accepted the offer with the main aim of securing an additional avenue to air its discontent of the current political situation.³²³ In other words, judging from the choice of these appointments and the constrictive manner in which the elections were held, Mubarak intended to obstruct the political participation of opponents through formal means with the aim of subsequently enticing them into his patronage system and hence his informal control. Yet, that such an attempt proved futile can be regarded as evidence of the unwillingness of opponents to adhere to the President's clientelist strategy of control.

The third and final major outcome of the 1984 electoral law amendments, was the fact that it provided the opposition with ammunition to appeal to the Supreme Constitutional Court. Citing the inability of an individual to nominate himself in elections as a breach of public right, equal opportunities and equality guaranteed to all citizens by Article 8, 40 and 62 of the Constitution, the opposition contested the amendments to the Elections Laws as unconstitutional.³²⁴

Again, the opposition's willingness to overtly challenge the President through appealing to the Supreme Constitutional Court in order to annul the electoral amendments can be regarded as symbolically significant. This is because such a move indicates the imposed constrictions did little in terms of pressuring opponents into accepting the political status quo. Instead, the situation provided them with the determination to demand- and be granted- change. The President was eventually

³²³ An indication that the Labour Party's acceptance of appointed places in the 1984 Assembly did not suggest its Co-option into the President's clientelist system of control is reflected in it's decision form an electoral alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood during the premature elections of 1987.

³²⁴ See "The Constitutional and Legal Framework for Legislative Elections in Egypt" in Legislative Elections...." CHRLA Report, October 1995.

propelled, at the end of 1986 to amend the electoral law, dissolve the Assembly by referendum, and set a premature election date for April 1987. Indeed, Mubarak's decision, as we discussed in the previous chapter, was also influenced considerations concerning his upcoming re-nomination. Nevertheless, the underlying factor was that a unified opposition front was instrumental in initiating the change.

Electoral law amendments of 1986
and legislative elections of 1987

Indicative of the President's determination to use the electoral process as a formal instrument with which to contain political participation, is the fact that the new amendments affected the electoral law in relatively minor aspects rendering negligible the improvement of the chances of competitors. The most significant feature of the amendments was the amalgamation of both a party list and an individual candidate system. Independent candidates were allocated one seat in each of the forty-eight constituencies and the winning independent candidate was required to obtain the largest number of votes of all competing independents. A figure which should be no less than 20% of the total votes in the constituency.

Although the number of candidates who stood for the forty-eight allocated numbered as many as 1,937 candidates, it appears the main beneficiaries of the independent category were not genuine independents. Neither were they opposition members like Khalid Mohyi al-Din who decided to run under that banner to overcome the constrictive 8% limit placed on participating parties. Instead, of the forty-eight independent places acquired in the 1987 elections, only nine seats were won by independents with opposition or no party affiliation. The majority of seats - thirty nine seats in total, were won by individuals identified as NDP members.³²⁵ The large number of contestants competing in

³²⁵ Middle East Contemporary Survey, Volume XI, P328, 1987.

this category therefore, suggests the provision of an independent category inadvertently produced an additional safety valve by providing the opportunity for disparate individuals with political aspirations to participate. However, as the electoral results suggest, this safety valve was rather superficial in that it expanded electoral participation, but the role of elections as a protective shield against a legitimate political threat remained intact.

The remaining constituency representatives under the amended electoral law were elected through the old party list system. However, the amended law stipulated that the votes of parties who did not obtain the 8% nation-wide votes be distributed among all the successful parties in direct proportion to their scores in the elections, rather than be credited to the largest party as in the old law.³²⁶ The consequences relating to the electoral amendments and the 1987 elections itself were in most aspects similar to the previous elections. However, the Neo-Wafd decided to compete in the elections without entering an alliance. Subsequently, the Muslim Brotherhood joined forces with the Labour Party and the Liberal Party to form a coalition. As a result, there was an overall increase in opposition incumbents in the legislature, as the Neo-Wafd gained thirty-six places and the coalition sixty.

While the NDP still maintained its 75% domination in the Assembly, the electoral outcome did appear to indicate signs of a strengthening opposition in the face of adversity. Moreover, the opposition remained united in its condemnation of the electoral system which it regarded as a "fake democracy"³²⁷ and "a horrible and violent repetition

³²⁶ The law also abolished the 30 seats allocated for women in the 1983 law: "Legislative Elections in Egypt...." CHRLA Report, October 1995: and also see "Legislature in Egypt" State Information Service, Cairo.

³²⁷ Al -Masa, 7 April 1987, cit.. MECS, P329, XI, 1987.

of the 1984 farce"³²⁸ and subsequently decided to return to the Supreme Constitutional Court to contest the amendment, citing it as an "infringement upon the right to [individual] nomination and a breach of the principals of equal opportunity and equality contrary to Articles 8, 40 and 62 of the Constitution."³²⁹ The final outcome appeared in May 1990 when the Supreme Constitutional Court did in fact rule the 1986 electoral law unconstitutional. Thus pressuring the President to issue a decree abolishing the party-list system altogether and returning to the individual candidate system of election by absolute majority for the premature elections of 1990.

Return to individual candidacy

Apart from the abolition of the party-list system, another important change in the electoral laws was the increase in the number of constituencies from forty-eight to two hundred and twenty two. The implications of such a change were that it was now theoretically easier for non-NDP members devoid of state resources and support to compete in the elections. It must be noted however that the President's decision to return to the individual candidacy system was perhaps more influenced by political strategy than by the court ruling. Obviously the President was aware of the Muslim Brotherhood's electoral coalitions in the previous elections of 1984 and 1987 and its penetration into the Assembly in both instances. As he later noted: "The door is now wide open for all political forces to participate...certain controls have even been by-passed, letting certain groups infiltrate - groups that the constitution and laws have banned from political activity to safeguard the homeland."³³⁰ In this context, the President perhaps felt the individual candidate system was after all preferable in that it would allow fewer

³²⁸ Al-Wafd, 7 April 1987, cit.. ibid.

³²⁹ Legislative Elections in Egypt: Rights ..., P4, CHRLA, Cairo 1995.

³³⁰ Mubarak address marking start of his third term as President, BBCMS ME/ 310140275/96E982/931014, 14 October 1993.

restrictions for individual candidates and consequently separate and weaken organised opposition groups.

Elections of 1990 and the major implications

Although it was an opposition initiative that led to the premature elections of 1990, the elections were boycotted by the Neo-Wafd, Muslim Brotherhood, Labour Party and Liberals, leaving only the Tajammu' to participate against the government's NDP. According to party members who boycotted those elections, the decision to abstain was related to two main issues: (i) objection to the Ministry of Interior's tradition of supervising polling stations and ballot count and; (ii) the continuation of Emergency Laws and its constricting effect on political participation. These issues were -and remain- genuine bones of contention with government. However, that the majority of leading opposition parties intended to pressure Mubarak into conceding to these demands by taking the unprecedented step of withdrawing from the elections, suggests that perhaps the opposition had overrated its gravity in the political arena.

The fact the opposition succeeded in its court battles with the government and obtained a constitutional court ruling invalidating both the electoral laws of 1983 and 1986 was perhaps instrumental in enhancing its confidence in confronting government with these additional demands. The opposition's enhanced perception of its power to pressure Mubarak was perhaps further enhanced by another factor. The President had decided to remove the then Minister of Interior, Zaki Badr, in January 1990 after he publicly admitted tampering with the results of the 1987 elections. It is worth noting, however, that the President's decision to remove Badr was also influenced by other considerations. Badr for example began to emerge as a political liability as a result of other factors such as the University of

Banha incident.³³¹ Yet, the opposition did not appear willing to interpret Badr's dismissal as perhaps a token concession on the part of Mubarak and acknowledge that the decision was also influenced by Mubarak's dissatisfaction with the Minister's political shortcomings. Rather, it seems the majority of opposition preferred to interpret Badr's removal as measure of their influence over government.

The decision of the opposition to stand firm in respect to its proclaimed demands appears to have been influenced by an additional factor. It believed the President would be embarrassed into concession if he felt an all-out opposition boycott would undermine his image. Especially in view of the fact that a boycott would mean the President's anticipated third term re-nomination in 1993 would be supported by a one party legislature - his own party. This feeling appeared more confirmed when the President attempted to persuade them to abandon the boycott. Mubarak did not actually make personal contact with the opposition leaders during that period. However indirect contact in the form of informal meetings and telephone conversations between senior presidential advisor, 'Osama Al-Baz, and representatives of the opposition did take place. Al-Baz's attempts to be mediator and dissuade the parties from boycotting the elections did not include promises to meet their demands. Subsequently his efforts appeared futile.³³²

It is possible Mubarak could have been embarrassed into some form of compromise with the opposition had it not been for the fact the 'Tajammu' eventually decided to abandon the boycott. The party's official opinion was that boycotting the elections was not a sensible form of demonstration

³³¹ A few days before his dismissal, the Minister was invited to give a speech at the University of Banha. During the speech he unleashed a stream of abuse against senior officials and public figures including fellow ministers, resulting in an uproar as lawyers and university staff threatened to strike. See Al-Sha'b, 9 January 1990.

³³² Personal Interview, 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, 17/12/1994.

since Emergency Laws are temporarily and unofficially lifted during that period thereby providing politicians a better opportunity to communicate with the public and recruit supporters. The Tajammu' therefore argued it unwise to pursue such action as it would merely isolate the parties from the electorate.³³³ On the surface, it would appear the argument presented by the Tajammu' was both practical and logical. After all, the other parties who pursued the boycott found themselves without direct access to the Assembly and were unable to communicate with the public for the following five years except through their respective newspapers. The Tajammu' on the other hand, gained at least some form of direct access to both parliament and the inhabitants of the constituencies it came to represent after gaining a token five seats in the elections.

Beneath the argument put forth however, there appears to have been another more covert issue dividing party members on the boycott issue. According to several sources within and outside party realms, Khalid Mohyi Al-Din, the Tajammu' leader, had been quite resentful of Neo-Wafd leader, Fu'ad Seraj Al-Din, for assuming the role of Opposition spokesman. The reason for such resentment possibly originates from a personal rivalry between both men as a consequence of disparate political origins. A government minister under King Faruq, and a member of one of the most prominent and aristocratic families in pre-revolutionary Egypt, Seraj Al-Din was amongst the pre-1952 elite who lost considerable wealth and influence under the Nasser regime and has subsequently never recognised the Revolution as more than a coup d'état.

In contrast, Mohyi Al-Din - whose origins were more modest, was one of the original Free Officers responsible for the 1952 Revolution. Moreover, under Nasser, he became a member

³³³ Personal Interviews with senior Tajammu' members including: 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, 17/12/1994, Dr Rif'at Sa'id, 8/1/95, 'Abu Al-'iz Al-Hariri, 28/12/94 and Lutfi Wakid 4/1/95.

of the new ruling class which replaced the likes of Seraj Al-Din. In this respect, it was probably humiliating for Mohyi Al-Din to find himself and his party being represented by the same individual and party who had been brought down as a direct result of his actions. Seraj Al-Din was also not attempting to abate this personal tension. For example, the ageing Wafd leader took the initiative to approach the government with the final decision to boycott the elections without informing the leaders of the other parties. Although the Opposition was aware the boycott appeared inevitable, the fact that Seraj Al-Din officially informed the government without prior warning took them all by surprise.

It is at this point Mohyi Al-Din decided to call upon the members of the Tajammu' Committee to inform them of his decision to participate in the elections. Almost half the Committee initially disagreed with the decision. They felt such actions would be a betrayal to the other parties and it would also signal defeat in their confrontation with the President. However, the Tajammu' leader insisted he could not, in principle, allow the party to participate in a boycott determined by Seraj Al-Din. The party, he argued, was independent, not a branch of the Neo-Wafd. Seraj Al-Din therefore had no right to inform the authorities of a final decision which involved any party apart from his own without the prior knowledge and consent of the respective leaders.³³⁴

Most of the Committee eventually came to agree with their Chairman. This move subsequently suggests a turning point for the Tajammu' leader and his party in terms of an emergence of clearer set of role expectations. That is, it would appear the Tajammu' leader had come to a point where a preference to mend fences with the government and accept his party's role as a permanent opposition outweighed the

³³⁴ Derived from personal interviews, January 1995, Cairo. Identity of interviewees can be obtained from author.

motivation to continue a battle led by a personal arch-rival.

The decision of the Tajammu' to participate in the 1990 elections can therefore arguably be regarded as a significant factor which influenced both the outcome of the boycott and the subsequent nature of President-Opposition relations. The party's presence in the electoral arena divided an opposition that had previously been united primarily on the basis of its unanimous stance against Mubarak and his form of democracy. The result of such a division was that a valid and potentially effective opposition protest became diluted to the advantage of Mubarak. This for example, put him in the position to claim that "an opposition is part and parcel of the State system" and that any party which was seeking to separate itself from the system was "wasting its constitutional role."³³⁵ As this statement suggests, the presence of just one opposition party contesting the elections and gaining entry to the Assembly contributed towards preventing the boycott from appearing as a wholesale rejection of the system. Instead it seems to have allowed Mubarak to depict the affair as the choice of individual, disconcerted parties.

By participating in the 1990 elections, it is not erroneous to suggest the Tajammu' became the first opposition party to enter into the regime's clientelist structure. Prior to the 1990 elections for example, there was little evidence to suggest the existence of clientelist relations between the regime and any of the opposition parties. However, as the result of the boycott, one can detect an emergence of informal links between the regime and the participating Tajammu'. Such links emerged primarily in the form of indirect assistance received by the Tajammu' from the government. During the elections for example, a number of

³³⁵ Mubarak's comment on the 1990 elections, "Egypt, A Decade...", State Information Service, Cairo, July 1991, P10.

NDP candidates were allowed to collaborate with Tajammu' candidates, rather than with other NDP candidates.

This form of collaboration basically involved the process of vote-exchanging between candidates. A mechanism which is made possible as a result of the one man-two votes electoral procedure which emerged under Nasser to ensure workers and peasants achieve fair representation in parliament. As the current constitution (Article 87) continues to stipulate 50% of the legislative Assembly must consist of workers or peasants, office seekers in each electoral constituency are subsequently categorised into two groups, *Fe'at* and *'amel*. To register as a *fe'at* is a straightforward procedure with the main requisite being the potential candidate is a university graduate or equivalent. The *'amel* on the other hand is theoretically a peasant or worker with less than degree level education. In reality, such candidates are rarely workers or peasants, but wealthy landowners or merchants.

The point here, however, is that as a result, each voter is allocated one vote to elect a representative in the *fe'at* category and the other for the selection of a deputy in the *'amel* category. Subsequent vote exchange is basically a system whereby a candidate in the *fe'at* category co-operates with a candidate in the *'amel* category in the same constituency such that the supporters of each vote for the other with the aim of doubling each candidate's total number of votes on election day.

While in theory, each voter utilises the one man-two votes system to choose his two representatives, in practice, this procedure revokes the whole objective of the one man-two votes system since supporters are exchanging their 'second' vote for the opportunity to double one candidate's electoral chances. This, as will be examined further in the following chapter, does not prevent vote-exchanging from being common, albeit, clandestine, practice. What was unusual prior to the 1990 elections however, was for

government nominated candidates to contemplate pursuing electoral collaboration of such nature with opposition candidates.

In view of this collaboration, it is interesting to note that the Tajammu' won five seats in 1990. Such token gains are not insignificant if we consider the fact the Tajammu' last gained entry to the legislature in 1976 when it was still confined to a platform within the ASU. Even more significant is the fact that all five winning candidates, including the chairman of the party, Khalid Mohyyi Al-Din, participated in vote exchange with their opposite NDP numbers in their respective constituencies. The Tajammu' deputy secretary-general, 'Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, justified this informal 'partnership' on the basis that the NDP candidates sought the alliance with his party's five winning candidates because they possessed well established power bases in their respective constituencies.³³⁶ There is little reason to question the validity of the individual power bases of the winning Tajammu' candidates. All five for example, were local people well-known throughout the community, with a long history of political activity. And in at least one case (Mohyyi Al-Din), a national political figure. Yet it is implausible to assert, given the Tajammu's poor electoral record, that it was the NDP candidates who needed the Tajammu' alliance in order to better their electoral chances.

The rural constituency of Kafr Shokr is one example of the five places in which the Tajammu' won a seat. The major competitors in the constituency consisted of three prominent locals: an NDP candidate in the 'amel category; and an NDP candidate and the Tajammu' candidate both in the fe'at category. Due to the boycott, the other candidates were locals of minor stature competing as independents. To illustrate the centre's indirect assistance of the Tajammu', the opposition candidate, in this case, Khalid

³³⁶ Personal interview, 16 December 1995, Cairo.

Mohyyi Al-Din, was given precedence over his NDP counterpart. 'Abd Al-Rahman Mosayr, the NDP 'amel candidate was allowed the freedom to join forces with Mohyyi Al-Din in a vote-exchange pact. Although the exact figures could not be confirmed, it is understood Mohyyi Al-Din and Mosayr shared roughly the same number of supporters in the constituency. The number of voters supporting 'Abd Al-Rahman Sarhan, the NDP fe'at and hence Mohyyi Al-Din's competitor was considerably less, estimated at perhaps half that of Mohyyi Al-Din or Mosayr.

Assuming there was no government interference during the elections, it would appear that it was Sarhan, not Mosayr who needed a significant vote exchange alliance in order to win a place in the Assembly. In this respect, had Mosayr joined forces with his NDP colleague, Sarhan, both NDP members would have won a seat in the elections. This is because their combined votes would surpass that of Mohyyi Al-Din and one of the minor independent candidates whom Mohyyi Al-Din could have contemplated an alliance. Therefore, while it is doubtful the government was directly involved in instigating the Mohyyi Al-Din-Mosayr alliance, the fact that the NDP candidate exchanged his supporters votes with that of the Tajammu' leader, at the expense of his NDP colleague, would be considered a risky career move unless the President, in his capacity of NDP leader, had not indirectly signalled his consent. Ultimately, the vote-exchange alliance of the other Tajammu' winners can be understood in the same context.

That participation in the 1990 elections eventually led the Tajammu' to publicly enter the regime's clientelist structure can be detected on another level. The party as we mentioned earlier, refused the President's 1984 offer to appoint one of its senior members into the legislature. In early 1995 the Tajammu' accepted the Presidential nomination of its Secretary-General, Dr Rifa't Sa'id to the Consultative (Shura) Council. This decision appears indicative of the role which the party has come to accept

for itself. Prior to 1990, the Tajammu', in the words of Sa'id "totally rejected the system."³³⁷ What this means is that like the other opposition parties, the Tajammu' did not accept the government's dominant position and its aim was to fight for a democratic multi-party system in the broad sense that all parties would be given equal opportunity to compete for government. In view of such highly ambitious expectations, opposition parties and in particular the respective party leaders did not accept Mubarak in the role of their patron. Mubarak's efforts to appoint members of the opposition into the People's Assembly therefore, was considered patronising and subsequently rebuffed.

The President's unsuccessful attempt to appoint the Tajammu's Dr Hanna in 1984 illustrates this to be the case. The fate of those opposition members who were tempted to accept a Presidential appointment also appears to affirm this. The Neo-Wafd's Mona Makram 'Obayd for example had her party membership withdrawn. The reason was because she accepted in 1990, a Presidentially nominated seat to the legislature. Fahmi Nashed, another Wafdist, also faced the same predicament after he accepted a Presidential nomination to the Shura Council in the same year.³³⁸

What this means is that the decision to participate in the 1990 elections, collaborate with members of the President's party, and formally accept a Presidential appointment for one of it's party leaders, the Tajammu' was evidently the first opposition party to enter the clientelist structure of the Mubarak regime. As the Tajammu' Secretary General Rif'at Sa'id explained, the party changed from confrontation to co-operation in its relationship with the government because: "it was crazy to isolate ourselves from the system of which we are part."³³⁹ What the comment

³³⁷ Personal Interview, Dr Rifa't Sa'id, 8 January 1995, Cairo.

³³⁸ Personal Interview, 'Ali Salama, 8 January 1995, Cairo.

³³⁹ Personal Interview, 8 January 1995, Cairo.

suggests, is that the temptation to nominally contribute towards the diversity of power through electoral participation appears to have become regarded as preferable to challenging the dominant power and achieving no electoral gains in the process. When for the first time under Mubarak's rule, the People's Assembly completed its first full five year term, it would appear the other opposition parties arrived at a similar conclusion to the Tajammu'.

Return of the opposition to
electoral participation: 1995

The boycott did not produce the widespread support the parties had expected, nor did it pressure Mubarak into even partially conceding to their demands. This meant the parties who participated in the boycott were left in need of reassessing both their position and political strategy in the context of their limited influence in the political arena at large. Moreover, Mubarak's insistence on upholding a State of Emergency, one can argue, intentionally constricted their activity to the extent that elections constituted the single most important avenue for activists to make contact with the public and formally recruit new members and supporters. In this respect, by withdrawing from electoral participation, the parties recognised they had inadvertently alienated themselves rather than their intended target of government. No longer prepared to continue the boycott and risk total obscurity, the opposition parties prepared to enter the 1995 electoral race on their own accord. Whilst the Neo-Wafd for example, rather meekly justified its decision on the basis that it had participated in elections since 1924 and had no intention of stopping now,³⁴⁰ the Labour party was more to the point:

"We boycotted the last elections to pressure the government into allowing free and fair elections. The government, however, ignored us. This time, we are

³⁴⁰ Al-Wafd, 13 July 1995.

participating with no illusions...we are aware that this time around government malpractice will be even more intense. However we decided in spite of their careless and short-sighted approach not to continue the boycott. This is because we care about the constitution and the stability of the nation and we do not want to leave the government with a free rein in these elections. This can only be achieved by our participation."³⁴¹

The fact Mubarak did not feel the need to dispatch advisors to informally persuade them to participate indicates the President was already aware of the opposition's predicament. And as such, was conscious of their intentions to return to the arena of political contest. From an alternate perspective, the absence of communication between the President and the opposition prior to the latest elections could also suggest the effects of the previous boycott on the President's image was so negligible that he was no longer apprehensive should a second boycott take place. In either case, the decision to return to the arena of electoral contest indicates how the opposition had come to regard elections- even in its non-competitive form, as important.

It is arguably for this reason that a shift in attitude can be detected during the 1995 electoral campaigns. To the obvious advantage of the government several opposition parties began to proclaim a shared identification with certain goals and values of the regime. Indeed, efforts to cultivate the local support of workers and urban poor during electoral rallies may have focused on the rejection of specific regime policies such as the privatisation of state owned factories or the Rent Law amendments. Yet allegiance to the regime in general did appear to become a prominent theme amongst several of the leading opposition parties.

³⁴¹ Al-Sha'ib, 29 September 1995.

Illustrative of this is main strategy by which opposition parties attempted to indicate such allegiance focused primarily on efforts to adopt anti-Islamist conviction. A move compatible with the President's conviction that "a correct party obliges all its members to adhere to its principles and not change their slogans and principles daily for temporary gain...or establish an alliance with undemocratic forces that hire the party's platforms and mouthpieces to circumvent law and order."³⁴² Heeding this warning was the Tajammu' party for example, who used the campaign slogan "Al-Din Lillah Wa al-Watan Lil Jami'" / "Religion is for God, The Nation is for All" throughout the 1995 elections. Evidently, this was to emphasis its rejection of those mixing politics with religion. In fact, at a press conference held by Tajammu' chairman, Khalid Mohyyi Al-Din prior to the elections, he stated that the participation of the other opposition parties was important, not, as one would assume, to defend their position against government domination. Rather, so as to: "defend ourselves from the threat of religious fundamentalism and terrorism."³⁴³

In view of the party's link with government during the 1990 elections, it is not altogether suprising that the Tajammu' wanted to separate itself from the Islamists and reaffirm its loyalty to the system. What is interesting however, is that the two parties whose previous association with the Muslim Brotherhood went as far as forming electoral coalitions, the Neo- Wafd and the Liberals, 1984 and 1987 respectively, also, as we will see, adopted similar strategies in efforts to distance themselves from the Islamist taboo.

³⁴² President's Address to Parliament, BBCMS, BBCME, 15 Nov. 1994: 411150292-AM3368 941116.

³⁴³ Formal Press release, Tajammu' Party, 14 October 1995.

The Neo-Wafd's shifting attitude

When in 1984 the neo-Wafd became the first party to form an electoral alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood, it would appear both groups mutually benefited. In defiance of the government's imposition of the party-list electoral laws, the alliance constituted the sole opposition victory in those elections. In addition, it is interesting to note that the Muslim Brotherhood, unlike the Tajammu', supported the Neo-Wafd's initiative to officially announce a general opposition boycott even though its leaders were also not informed prior to the public statement.

In view of such comradeship in face of the Mubarak regime, the Neo-Wafd's 1995 electoral propaganda does suggest intentional efforts aimed to discredit the Brotherhood and consequently appease the government. For example Sa'd 'Abd Al-Nur, the Neo-Wafd's Secretary-General declared in an interview during the 1995 elections: "In 1984 the Muslim Brothers were like orphans. They were a small family... they needed to ally themselves with a political party".³⁴⁴ 'Abd Al-Nur, it would seem, was attempting to justify the Wafd-Brotherhood alliance by hinting it was a Brotherhood initiative and that his party conceded to the alliance because they regarded the Muslim Brothers as a harmless entity. More to the point however, was 'Abd Al-'Aziz Muhammad, a prominent lawyer and senior neo-Wafd member. During a discussion with senior party colleagues in which an 'Ahali journalist attended, he stated that: "it is not in our interest to co-operate [in 1995 elections] with an organisation [i.e. Muslim Brotherhood] that is targeted by the authorities."³⁴⁵

The manner in which the party began to overtly endorse Muslim-Coptic ties was reflective of its attempt to distance itself from the Islamic trend. 'Abd Al-Nur, it

³⁴⁴ Interview in Al-Ahram Weekly, 19-25 October 1995.

³⁴⁵ Al-'Ahali, 4 October 1995.

should be noted, is a Coptic lawyer who was personally chosen for the post by Fu'ad Seraj al-Din in early 1995. The 1995 elections also witnessed the nomination of thirty Coptic candidates- the largest proportion of Christian nominations by the Neo-Wafd since its 1978 revival. As if to further emphasise its non-Islamic tendencies, the illustrations on the Party's electoral posters for example depicted four figures holding hands in unison: a peasant in *jalabeyya*, an urbanite dressed in Western clothing and an Imam and Priest wearing their respective religious garb. The slogan above the posters read: "Al-Wafd al-Jadid: Hezb Al-Wehda Al-Wataneyya"/ "The Neo-Wafd: The Party of National Unity". It would appear the poster was aimed at attracting four major social bases within Egyptian society: peasants, workers, Muslims and Christians.

However, on closer inspection, it is possible to argue it was not necessary to include the characters symbolising Muslims and Christians with those representing workers and peasants since the former groups are not separate and distinct from the latter. In this respect, the neo-Wafd's nomination of a large number of Coptic candidates and the inclusion of symbols representing the unity of Islam and Christianity in electoral posters were all point at the Party's attempt to publicly denounce the political ambitions of the Islamic opposition and subsequently gain Presidential favour. This assumption appears to be reinforced by the potentially appeasing comments of 'Abd al-'Aziz Muhammad who claimed that his party was not seeking, nor does it: "want power...all we want [from elections] is to spread the Wafd ideology."³⁴⁶

It is also worth noting that Fahmei Nashid whose dismissal from the Neo-Wafd was the result of his acceptance of a Presidential nomination to the Shura Council was reinstated to his former position within the party in 1995. What this implies is that the party no longer considered Presidential

³⁴⁶ Al-'Ahali, 4 October 1995.

appointments and hence co-option into the regime an unacceptable option.

The liberal response

Although the Liberal Party's electoral efforts to distance itself from the Muslim Brotherhood were less conspicuous in comparison to the Neo-Wafd, certain factors indicate the Party was also attempting to dissociate itself from the Islamic connection and instead publicly identify with the regime. In contrast to the third member of the 1987 tripartite alliance, the Labour Party, there was no evidence to suggest a direct association between the Liberals and the Muslim Brotherhood during the 1995 electoral campaign. According to Brotherhood spokesman Ma'mun al-Hudhaybi, the tripartite alliance was not necessary during the 1995 elections because the change in electoral laws meant Brotherhood members could participate as independent candidates. However, he did stress although the three parties constituted separate entities, co-operation between them continues to exist despite the return to the individual candidacy system. Such co-operation included "members of the coalition not running against each other in the same constituency" and a mutual exchange of "manual assistance during the electoral campaign."³⁴⁷

Evidence that the existence of Liberal-Brotherhood co-operation is dubious however, is reflected paradoxically, by the fact that Al-Hudhaybi nominated himself in the Cairo constituency of Doqqi and was subsequently competing against, amongst others, Hamza De'bes, a high ranking official within the Liberal party. According to Al-Hudhaybi, the decision to enter the electoral race in Doqqi was not to compete against any of the candidates, but simply to spread the Islamic message.³⁴⁸ However, this remark appeared in complete contradiction to the earlier

³⁴⁷ Personal interview, Ma'mun Al-Hudhaybi, 11 Nov. 1995, Cairo.

³⁴⁸ Personal interview, Ma'mun Al-Hudhaybi, 11 Nov. 1995, Cairo.

public views of De'bes who believed competition did exist and he was not aware of any co-ordination between the Liberal party and the Muslim Brotherhood.³⁴⁹

Indications that the Liberal party's inclination was to integrate itself within the system and distance itself from the Muslim Brothers can perhaps be poignantly illustrated through the electoral campaign of Mustafa Bakri, the editor-in-chief of Al-Ahrar, the Party's official newspaper. Bakri competed in the *fe'at* category against Muhammad Mahjub, the Minister of Religious Endowment in the industrial constituency of Helwan wa-al-Tibbin. Bakri's opponent, Mahjub, originates from Helwan and is thus considered *ibn al-balad* (a term used to describe a "local son"). His family connection to the area is maintained through the large number of relatives who continue to reside there.

Moreover, since 1979 Mahjub has represented the constituency's *fe'at* category as an NDP deputy. Through his senior status in government he has been able to provide much funding for his constituency over the years from which the residents have benefited. Consequently, this working class constituency can claim subsidised housing, surfaced roads, schools and youth centres as amongst the benefits attained by Mahjub. Subsequently, through the merits of being *ibn al-balad* and due to the extensive services he had been able to provide for his constituency as a result of his senior position in government, Mahjub's power base was inherently more extensive than that of relative newcomer Bakri. In fact, Bakri's upper Egyptian (*Sa'idi*) origins and current residence in the middle class suburb of Ma'di meant that he did not possess any ties to the constituency until the summer of 1995 when he helped to establish a local independent newspaper *Sawt Helwan*.

³⁴⁹ Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

Helwan wa al-Tibbin however is home to a large number of Sa'idi migrant workers and their families. Bakri therefore hoped he could challenge Mahjub's virtual safe seat by cultivating the support of his fellow upper Egyptians by using *ibn al-balad* sentiments. To attract as wide an audience as possible, Bakri's electoral strategy also focused on revealing Mahjub's misappropriation of state resources and corruption.³⁵⁰ What was interesting about Bakri's accusations however, was that he publicly attacked the political shortcomings of Mahjub in a manner which reflected negatively on his opponent, but not the regime itself. An excerpt noted from his rally speech in Helwan's 'Arab Rashed neighbourhood illustrates this point:

"The Minister attempted to prevent this rally from taking place today through bribery and blackmail [of the voters], but these methods can't work all the time....why hasn't he responded to my accusations [of corruption] or taken me to court? We are not afraid of him, we don't care about life or death, what we do care about is the property of the orphans and the poor ending up in his pocket [loud applause]...why doesn't he respect the constitution, respect the people and respect 'amn al-dawla (state security)? I was speaking to a member of al-'amn (someone from the Interior Ministry) and he assured me election day will be clean and honest. If Muhammad Mahjub thinks the State will interfere to help him, he is insulting the Ministry of Interior, insulting the State and insulting the President."³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ The Ministry of Religious Endowments is responsible for the distribution of property and money bequeathed (voluntarily and usually in a will) by individuals to the State for the purpose of assisting society's poor and underprivileged. When an individual leaves no will and relatives cannot be traced upon his death, the Ministry is automatically entitled to his Estate. Bakri's accusations are that Mahjub distributes the Ministry's spoils to his relatives and friends rather than the poor, whose entitlement it is. In particular, he claimed that he held documentation proving that Mahjub acquired for one of his two wives an apartment overlooking the Nile worth an estimated L.E. one million that was in fact the Ministry's property.

³⁵¹ Personal attendance of 'Arab Rashed rally, 16 November 1995, Helwan, Egypt.

Although a government minister was being publicly denounced, the President's appointment of, and subsequent connection to Mahjub, was never in question. Bakri it seems, elevated the President above the fray thus indicating a public acceptance of the existing political order. Moreover, as personal communication between members of the opposition and the security apparatus would not exist without both the knowledge and approval of the President, Bakri's reference to a cordial conversation with a member of the Ministry of Interior can thus indicate the development of such links.

With reference to the vote-exchanging process, the same case can also be used to illustrate the extent to which the Liberal party sought to distance itself from the Muslim Brotherhood connection. The main contenders in Helwan wa al-Tibbin's 'amel category comprised three individuals; Muhammad Mustafa, (NDP), 'Ali Fathi Al-Bab, (Islamist), and Mustafa 'Abd Al-Ghaffar, (Independent). The NDP candidate can be considered the least popular of the three opponents. This was because as an employee in Sharikat al-Harir, one of the many state owned factories in Helwan, Mustafa's short political career began as an Independent in 1990 to protest against the government and resulted in his defection to the NDP in that same year. The series of worker's strikes in Helwan in 1989 resulted in the death of three workers during clashes with the police. Infuriated, the workers took an anti-government stance in the 1990 elections by grouping to support one of their own workers rather than the NDP nominated 'amel. On entering the People's Assembly however, Mustafa joined the ruling NDP. Thus letting the workers down and at the same time flying in the face of the reason he had been elected in the first place.

In view of his betrayal of the Helwan workers, Mustafa could not cultivate popular support within the constituency during the 1995 elections despite the vast administrative and financial assistance at his disposal as an NDP

candidate. Understandably, as the point of entering a vote-exchange pact is to accumulate as many predetermined votes as possible, neither Mahjub nor Bakri wanted an alliance with the unpopular candidate. The other two candidates were considerably more popular in comparison to Mustafa, although it must be noted, the size of their respective power-bases appeared to differ substantially. The independent Gafaar, was, like Mustafa before him, a public sector employee from the same silk cloth factory and the 1995 elections comprised his first attempt to enter electoral competition.

According to several sources however, Mustafa's networks with fellow workers was limited primarily to those with direct contact with him in the factory. In contrast, the Islamic Al-Bab, another local, was in a position to claim a more extensive power-base, especially in the densely populated Mayo and Tibbin districts of Helwan. This was primarily a result of the loss of workers faith in secular co-workers stemming from Mustafa's actions in 1990. Moreover, unlike Ghaffar, who was not associated with any particular political group, Al-Bab relied upon the organisational skills of the Muslim Brotherhood to cultivate and expand his power-base. In view of the fact that Bakri needed a well established partner to overcome the veteran minister's extensive power-base in Helwan, he chose not^{ro} ally with the Islamic Al-Bab. Instead he preferred to be associated with the relative newcomer and independent, Ghaffar.

While Mahjub formed a victorious pact with Al-Bab, the actions in this case are a further indication of the Liberal party's reservation to continue it's Islamic alliance and hence risk offending the regime. It is worth noting that Mubarak removed Mahjub from the cabinet immediately after the elections. It is not erroneous to suggest that this move was primarily influenced by the fact that the minister, to the President's disapproval, formed an alliance with a Muslim Brother and hence inadvertently

helped that organisation achieve its sole electoral victory.

Co-operating with the authorities:
some implications

The outcome of the 1995 elections witnessed the Liberal Party win only one seat. The Tajammu' and the Neo-Wafd fared little better with five and six seats respectively. The poor results did not however, appear to reflect overt government interference with the three party's electoral results. On the contrary, as the 1995 elections showed the Liberal party and the Neo-Wafd followed the Tajammu's lead and shifted their stand to complement rather than challenge government position. The government, in turn, accommodated their electoral participation to the extent that deliberate obstruction directly pointing at government involvement was not apparent. In fact, it has been noted that in some constituencies with prominent members from these parties, the NDP nominated minor and hence unchallenging candidates. A "low key" candidate for example, was nominated by the NDP to compete against Yasīn Seraj Al-Dīn, brother of the Neo-Wafd's chairman, in the Cairo constituency of Qasr Al-Nil.³⁵² Seraj Al-Dīn, it is worth noting, won the election, and judging from his post-election comment that his success: "was the best evidence of democracy and freedom"³⁵³, it would also appear that he had decided to enter the regime's clientelist structure in return for an electoral gain.

In general, however, co-operating with the authorities does not suggest that electoral competition was equal and fair. After all, the disparity between opposition and government resources remained evident, as did electoral malpractice. But as we will elaborate in the following chapter, electoral malpractice was primarily oriented to the individual level of the participating candidates.

³⁵² Al-Ahram Weekly, 9-15 November 1995.

³⁵³ The Egyptian Gazette, 8 December 1995.

Implications for remaining opposition

Conversely, it appears that those parties which did not adjust their roles and expectations to fit within the existing system found little freedom to participate in the 1995 elections. The Muslim Brotherhood, the Labour party and the Nasserite party comprise such opposition. The unwillingness to compromise their position and aspirations, is evident in the manner in which they attempted to undermine the government during the electoral campaign. Perhaps the most provocative of which was the platform adopted by the Nasserite party.

In view of the fact that the current regime stems from the 1952 Revolution, the Nasserites' electoral campaign appeared to have been focused on attempts to erode the regime's legitimacy through promoting themselves as the real guardians of Nasser's ideology. The prominent electoral posters plastered around the constituencies appeared with the large photograph of Nasser beside an extensive quotation from one of his speeches in which he warns the nation to be wary of "impostors" and "deceivers", and to protect the revolutionary gains: "the nation is yours, the fields are yours, the factories belong to the citizens, the national economy is your home and shelter...be careful not to lose it...be careful... be careful...be careful." The poster's message appears to be intent on portraying the regime's 'formal' economic reforms and privatisation plans as incompatible with the socialist policies of Nasser and subsequently suggesting that the Nasserite party, not the regime, are the true guardians of Nasser's revolutionary achievements. As Jaber 'Abd Al-'Aziz, a Nasserite electoral candidate, declared to a group of working class voters in Cairo's Mohandesin area:

"Nasser is not dead, we are here fighting to keep his ideology alive, [the government] is causing the public sector to disintegrate, graduates from 1984 onwards are unemployed...the pasha's sons get the jobs and the gap between the rich and poor

is widening...capitalism is not for us, it is for Europe, it is for America but it is not for us...America wants to eliminate the Arabs, Nasser knew this, he was not fooled by them!"³⁵⁴

Moreover, while the Neo-Wafd and the Liberals were refraining from allying with the Islamists in an attempt to appease the government, the Nasserites did not appear to adopt such conceptions: "The general feeling in the party at the moment" declared 'Abd Al-Halim Qandil, a senior member of the Nasserite Party, "is not only that there should be much more solidarity with the Islamists, but that the Muslim Brotherhood should be allowed to operate as a political party... The Islamists can organise and gather people. We can't. But after they have gathered, they ask 'where now?' ... They need us as we need them."³⁵⁵

It would appear from such remarks that the Nasserite party was not only appearing to question the legitimacy of the regime in its electoral campaign, but it was also willing to contemplate an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. The Nasserites' position was perhaps most unexpected. It should be noted that the party, under the leadership of Dhiya Al-Din Dawud applied for a formal license in 1988. It was not unexpectedly rejected by the government controlled party license committee. What is interesting however is that Dhiya Al-Din Dawud and two other members of his yet to be formalised party entered (as independents) the elections of 1990 and won. Presumably, the government felt the Nasserites were following the example of fellow opponents the Tajammu' and thus left them to participate unhindered. This assumption appears further verified when in 1991, the government did not contest the court ruling granting the Nasserites formal party status. The Nasserites on the other hand, appear not to have shared the government's

³⁵⁴ Personal attendance of gathering, 12 November 1995, Cairo, Egypt. Bakri also mentioned to us that he actually has regular contact with Hasan Al-'Alfi, the then minister of interior.

³⁵⁵ Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

perception. Hence its decision to take an overtly anti-government stand in 1995. In this context, the fact that the party won only one electoral seat in the 1995 elections indicates the consequences of the party's refusal to adhere the President's conception of opposition role expectations.

The Muslim Brotherhood and the Labour Party

The Labour Party and the Muslim Brotherhood appear to have faced more or less similar consequences for apparently the same reasons. In fact, since the informal alliance of the two groups continued and can thus be regarded as a more powerful challenge to the regime than the newly formed Nasserite party, efforts to prevent fruitful participation in the elections appeared to be more evident.

One of the most conspicuous strategies employed by the government was the arrest of eighty-three prominent Muslim Brotherhood members on the alleged grounds of initiating "illegal activities".³⁵⁶ This move was apparently intended to prevent the Islamic organisation from nominating its leading candidates in the forthcoming elections. One of those arrested was 'Esam Al-'Eryan, one of our first Brotherhood contacts and secretary-general of the Doctors Association. During an interview conducted the previous year, it was clear why the Brotherhood gave the government cause for concern. As one of the organisation's prominent leaders, Al-'Eryan stressed the reason the Muslim Brotherhood participates in legislative elections is to compete for power. A view he maintained would continue regardless of whatever obstacles the government placed in their way. The point he argued is that "if we are allowed to gain power through elections, we will be willing to also lose power through elections. However, if we gain power

³⁵⁶ Ma'mun Al-Hudaybi, Personal Interview, 11 November 1995, Cairo. Also see: "New Blow to Muslim Brotherhood" in Al-Ahram Weekly, 12-18 October 1995.

through other means, then of-course we will not leave through elections."³⁵⁷

That the Muslim Brotherhood have the potential to win in the event of competitive elections, is extremely likely according to Hala Mustafa, a specialist on the organisation.³⁵⁸ Hence, the fact that the organisation appeared unwilling to adhere to the government's concept of elections, even after being given the "green light" to compete in previous elections, meant in the words of Mustafa, that the government "was not getting anything in return."³⁵⁹ That the Muslim Brotherhood was apparently not willing to be recruited into the electoral chain of clientelism and control implied that the government did not want them to compete in elections at all. This, for example was evident not only in the arrest and military trials faced by some of its members in election year, but in the fact a military court ordered on 22 November the immediate closure of the Brotherhood's official headquarters in downtown Cairo.³⁶⁰

Moreover, the government's attempts to accommodate opposition figures such as the Neo-Wafd's Yasīn Seraj Al-Dīn, was evident in reverse for the Muslim Brotherhood members who did manage to compete in the elections. Ma'mūn Al-Hudhaybi, the Brotherhood's official spokesman for example, was competing in the Cairo constituency of Doqqi. Al-Hudhaybi competed in elections for the first time in 1987 and thus came to represent Doqqi in the Assembly between 1987 to 1990. Apart from the fact Al-Hudhaybi depended upon the support of his organisation, Al-Hudhaybi

³⁵⁷ Personal Interview, 13 December 1994, Cairo. On 23 November 1995 the military court passed verdict on fifty-four of the detained Muslim Brotherhood members. Most were sentenced to three years imprisonment with hard labour. Al- 'Eryan was sentenced to five years imprisonment with hard labour. See: Middle East Times Egypt, 3-9 December 1995.

³⁵⁸ Personal Interview, 21 December 1994.

³⁵⁹ Personal Interview, 21 December 1994.

³⁶⁰ See: Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

also found support in Doqqi as a result of his family's deep-seated roots in the area. The Hudhaybi family, it is alleged, own a large proportion of Ibn al-Walid Square, a renowned area in Doqqi. Hence the locals presumably regarded him in the '*ibn al-balad*' context.

When Al-Hudhaybi and most of the other opposition members boycotted the elections in 1990, Al-Hudhaybi's seat was taken by 'Amal 'Othman, Egypt's long-standing Minister of Social Affairs. Yet as Al-Hudhaybi returned in 1995 to re-contest his seat, it would seem that 'Othman wanted to be transferred to an easier seat in Khanka, Cairo. Yet it was apparently Kamal Al-Shatheli, the NDP's electoral co-ordinator who insisted 'Othman remained. The point was that with a minister competing for the seat, and with the resources of her Ministry at her disposal, Al-Hudhaybi would have little chance of re-election.³⁶¹

Prior to the elections the Labour Party, it would appear, was targeted in a similar manner by the government. This, however, was surprising in view of the claim that the government had "warned" the Labour Party of the potential consequences of allying itself with the Muslim Brotherhood in the then forthcoming elections.³⁶² Obviously this warning was not heeded, because using its mouthpiece, the Labour Party indicated that the decision to participate in the elections was not only an alliance decision, but also one which was based on the governmentally provoking view that:

"The Muslim Brotherhood and the Labour Party are aware of the nation's support for them and it is therefore the duty of the alliance to change its strategy and

³⁶¹ Personal Interview, 11 November 1995, Cairo. In further efforts to ensure his campaigning did not run smoothly, he was constantly monitored by the security services. For example, during the same interview, he mentioned how the previous day the Ministry of interior dispatched five full police vans to the mosque where he was performing Friday prayers simply to ensure he did nothing more than pray.

³⁶² Al-'Ahali, 4 October 1995.

participate in the forthcoming elections."³⁶³

Although not to the extent of its Brotherhood allies, the government did in fact attempt to detain several senior party leaders. Magdi Husayn, the editor in chief of the party's newspaper Al-Sha'b, was charged in October 1995 with having published in his paper an article that accused a minister's son of impropriety. Husayn, it appears, approved an article in January 1995 alleging that an unnamed son of an unnamed minister dined at a five star hotel with friends and subsequently refused to pay the bill. When the manager approached the young man in question, he was allegedly beaten up.³⁶⁴ Due to the charges being brought to court, it emerged that the young man was the son of Hasan Al-'Alfi, the Minister of Interior. The point here is that the decision to sue Husayn during the electoral period put intense pressure on the newspaper editor to abstain from competing in the elections.

Magdi Husayn's uncle, and Secretary General of the Labour Party also found himself in a similar situation in early 1995. Returning from a trip to Turkey, 'Adel Husayn was arrested at Cairo airport. It was alleged that he left on his plane seat hand-written anti-government papers, which the authorities argued constituted evidence of the anti-government propaganda he had distributed abroad. The absurdity of the charge and the Journalist Syndicate's extensive coverage of the case appears to have forced the government to back down and release 'Adel Husayn, without charge at the end of January 1995.³⁶⁵ Thus being unable to prevent 'Adel Husayn from participating in the elections, he proceeded to contest the fe'at seat in the constituency of Madinat Nasr, Cairo.

³⁶³ Al-Sha'b, 29 October 1995.

³⁶⁴ Various sources including personal interview with Magdi Husayn, 12 November 1995, Cairo.

³⁶⁵ Various sources including personal interview with 'Adel Husayn, 13 November 1995, Cairo.

What is worth mentioning here is the apparent efforts of the government to prevent 'Adel Husayn from winning. Similar to the tactic of placing a Minister opposite the Muslim Brotherhood's Ma'mun Al-Hudhaybi, 'Adel Husayn found himself competing against NDP candidate 'Abd al-Mon'im 'Imara, chairman of the Higher Council for Youth and Sport. Yet, in a more blatant tactic to gain advantage 'Imara, using his position of authority, was allowed to register fifteen thousand non-resident young adults on to the voting register of the constituency. Arguing that fifteen thousand voters "are not enough to ensure success in a constituency of sixty-four thousand registered voters", 'Imara publicly added that: "I had promised to revive young people's interest in civic action...Why should I deprive them of the opportunity of electing members to the People's Assembly? This is not an accusation. If I had found half a million young people to participate in electing their representative, I would have done it."³⁶⁶

Evidently, the government approved this logic, because it did nothing to prevent 'Imara's manipulation of power. This was left to the Labour Party who filed a lawsuit contesting 'Imara's nomination. The administrative court did not rule against 'Imara's nomination, but it did rule the registration list of non-residents was illegal.³⁶⁷ 'Imara in the final analysis, won the seat. It is interesting to note here that whilst the President removed Muhammad Al-Mahjub, the Minister of Religious Endowments from the Ministry after he collaborated in the elections with a Muslim Brotherhood member, 'Imara was not officially reprimanded by the President for what was evidently a serious abuse of power.

³⁶⁶ Al-Ahram Weekly, 9-15 November 1995.

³⁶⁷ Al-Ahram Weekly, 30 November-6 December 1995.

3.4 Conclusion

That elections are utilised to recruit into the regime's clientelist system of control political parties apart from the President's own 'ruling' party does appear evident in Mubarak's Egypt. The point, however, is that multi-party elections can only perform such a role if the government can ensure that opposition parties are constrained to the extent they become like the President's party, dependent upon the government and its patronage. In such circumstances, they are compelled to accept the political status-quo and hence to acknowledge that participation in elections is not to compete for power but to gain access to a share of the resources controlled by the centre. To a large degree, this concept appears to have emerged, albeit gradually, amongst the opposition.

However, if the government cannot use elections for such an advantageous mechanism of recruitment, then it seems that there is little point in allowing opponents space in the electoral arena. The Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic oriented Labour Party for example, have not appeared willing to be pressured into the government's clientelist chain. This, from the government's perspective, would appear to have two negative implications. First, it means the government is unable to use elections to persuade them to accept the existing political system. This in turn, means that the participation of these opponents in elections provides them with the opportunity perhaps to recruit more followers- followers who like their leaders, are unlikely to enter the clientelist chain linking the centre to the periphery. This constitutes a potentially serious threat to the regime.

It is therefore not suprising that the government eventually conceded by the time of the 1995 elections that it was not in their interest for these opponents to participate in elections. As both the Ministers of Interior and Information, Hasan Al-'Alfi and Safwat Al-Sharif

respectively, publicly vowed: "there will be no room [in the 1995 elections] for political groups who use religion as their platform."³⁶⁸ This position was later reinforced by President Mubarak during a television interview. As he put it:

"Dialogue with the Islamists is no longer an option. The late President Sadat tried this and he got nowhere so he got rid of three quarters of them. We have tried dialogue with them but as soon as they started to get strong they no longer wanted dialogue so I took the decision in 1993 to have no more of that."³⁶⁹

The importance of elections as we mentioned above, is of course not simply to recruit politicians into the regime's clientelist system of control, but also to implicate the followers who support them. Hence, in the following chapter, we will examine the role of voters. In particular, the way in which the individualistic and hence controllable approach to political participation appears to be further reaffirmed as a result of non-competitive multi-party elections.

³⁶⁸ Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

³⁶⁹ Mubarak Interview, Egyptian Satellite Channel, 23 November 1997.

Chapter Four

Contestants; Voters and; the Significance of Personalistic Methods of Voter Recruitment.

4. 1 Introduction

Non-competitive multi-party elections as we have been arguing, appear to be utilised by the Mubarak government primarily as a tool with which clientelist control over political participation can be reaffirmed and expanded. On the party level, we attempted to show how formal and informal factors within Egypt's contemporary political arena seem to have contributed towards shaping the role of elections in such a manner. In this chapter, we will turn our attention to the lowest tier of the clientelist chain and thus examine the nature and implications of contestant-voter relations.

It would seem that one of the most prominent features of Egypt's multi-party electoral arena is the inclination of contestants to adopt campaign strategies that appear predominantly personalistic in nature. In other words, whilst the relaxing of emergency laws during the one month campaign period prior to elections formally offers political parties the opportunity to promote their links with the masses, party nominated contestants appear to use this period to concentrate more upon cultivating their own personal networks of electoral alliances.

The adoption of such personally oriented political participation appears significant from two main perspectives. The most obvious being that because it is predominantly personalistic in nature- i.e. the cultivation of voter support is primarily directed at individual candidates and not necessarily the parties they represent- party development and thus group cohesion is further hindered as a consequence. In turn, what this means is that

multi-party participation is even more unlikely to constitute a threat to the prevailing system of rule because such forms of electoral participation do little to encourage the recruitment of party supporters at the grass roots level- a necessary function if links between political parties and the masses are to expand. Instead, it appears to reinforce the structure of political parties as controllable entities comprising conglomerates of personalities each of whom possess their own personal followers.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, the function of elections in defining the role of politicians officially representing disparate political views as intermediaries between central authority and their respective localities appears also to be reinforced as a consequence. This is because the personal assurances of support cultivated by electoral candidates are primarily conditional upon the downward flow of patronage, most of which can realistically only be channelled from the centre. In such a context, if a candidate is to expand his network of supporters and thus increase his chances of gaining office, then emphasis upon his links to, and hence dependence on, central government, predominantly overrides issues of party programmes or ideologies.

Logically, the adoption of personalistic methods of voter recruitment by party candidates is advantageous to the regime because, in the final analysis, it appears to reaffirm the clientelist function of elections as articulated from above. Yet, in order to understand why electoral participation at the lowest tier of the clientelist structure appears to correspond, in general, to governmental expectations, it will be necessary to start with an in-depth examination of the reasons party candidates resort to such tactics in the first place.

During the elections, NDP candidates enjoy one particular privilege unavailable to their opposition counter-parts.

This is the organisation of formal events in which senior government officials demonstrate their support for the candidates through attendance as guest speakers, and which public sector employees are 'encouraged' to attend as supportive members of the public. However, as we examine the nature of such events, our aim will be to stress that whilst these events are significant in that they constitute the main form of assistance provided by the NDP to its candidates (apart from ballot malpractice perhaps), such events are not as advantageous as they may appear in terms of strengthening and expanding the party or the candidate's base of support.

In the case of public electoral campaigning as adopted by opposition candidates we will show how government imposed constraints prevent opposition candidates from organising large electoral events on the scale of their NDP rivals. However, we will also point out a less obvious impediment generally faced by opposition candidates. Namely that like their NDP rivals, they too appear to lack adequate support from their own parties during election campaigns. This, as we will argue, is the underlying factor which leads candidates to adopt individualistic campaign strategies independent of the parties they officially represent. Strategies which in turn, make it less difficult for the government to utilise multi-party elections as a clientelist mechanism of co-option and control.

In contrast to the above, one of the main reasons the Muslim Brotherhood constitutes a threat to the regime, is because the above issue is not a problem evident within the Organisation. Instead, the support and assistance which Brotherhood candidates appear to obtain from their organisation means that electoral campaigns are consequently regarded as an opportunity to focus predominantly on the recruitment of 'party' supporters rather than on the construction of personal networks of alliances. Logically, this type of electoral participation contributes towards the expansion and strengthening of

group cohesion. This in turn, makes it even less likely that the regime can utilise elections to pressure the Brotherhood, and arguably those who ally themselves with it, into co-option and hence control.

4.2 Formal Electoral Participation:

NDP candidates

As the President's party, the NDP constitutes the sole party whose candidates have direct access to state resources. NDP candidates therefore are in a prime position to organise unhindered public gatherings in state owned properties such as schools and youth clubs. As if to emphasise their prestigious connections and show they are supported by the government, NDP candidates also have access to senior state and government personnel who attend such campaign gatherings as guest speakers. In a joint gathering held by NDP candidates Hamdi Al-Sayyed and Muhammad Rajab in Hike Step, Heliopolis, for example, the contestants were provided not only with a newly constructed hall, spacious enough to hold a seated audience of approximately three hundred,³⁷⁰ but also with an impressive selection of prominent guest speakers.

Formal NDP event at Hike Step

Hike Step, which is situated on the desert outskirts of Heliopolis, can best be described as an industrial village. This is because the area, which has been inhabited for less than a decade, is predominantly occupied by workers employed in the surrounding state owned chemical and military factories. Due to the relative isolation of the area, the journey to work from Cairo would be quite strenuous if not impossible on public transport. Rather than travel therefore, the workers and their families were provided within the industrial precincts with state subsidised housing and other amenities such as shops. What this means is that whilst it is difficult for opposition

³⁷⁰ Personal guess derived during personal attendance, 18 November 1995.

candidates to penetrate what can be regarded as an exclusive state-owned compound of this nature, NDP nominated contestants seem to have little difficulties gaining direct access to the inhabitants of such areas.

In the case of Al-Sayyed and Rajab, the NDP nominated contestants were not only provided with the spacious hall to hold their gathering, but were also provided with prominent guest speakers. The speakers included General Muhammad Wajih, the administrative manager of the local military productions factory; General Muhammad 'Afifi, head of security at the same factory; 'Aziz Fathallah, local treasurer of the NDP; General Karam Torraya, presidentially appointed Head of Heliopolis; and General 'Ahmad Al-Jawahirgi, the deputy governor of Cairo.

The NDP backed gathering appears to have attracted a significant crowd to the extent that the seats in the hall were all filled. Moreover, a large proportion of the audience was standing and even spilling onto the outside pavement. Judging from the atmosphere of the audience however, the extensive turn-out was less a demonstration of electoral support and more a result of a need to communicate with those in authority. This for example was reflected when members of the audience publicly questioned the speakers on matters relating to the local community. Matters arose such as the inadequate supply of water and electricity in the residential areas.

It was also clear from the enormous crowd which gathered around the speakers platform that at least one hundred members of the audience had also come to present personal petitions to individual officials. Saber Shawwa, an employee in one of the factories for example, managed in the scramble to present a petition intended for the deputy governor. In his petition he was asking for intervention because his mother who had been widowed for a year, had not

yet gained access to her entitled state widows pension.³⁷¹ The fact that the majority of the audience were present primarily to question and petition the state officials on communal and personal matters rather than to listen and support electoral propaganda, was difficult to ignore. Even the deputy governor was eventually led to declare angrily to the audience: "don't expect to throw a thousand problems in my face and expect me to solve it all tomorrow!"³⁷²

Since Hike Step can be considered a newly established and relatively isolated community, one can argue that it is perhaps not too suprising for the inhabitants to use NDP electoral events to communicate their personal concerns with the authorities. However, the presence of senior state and government officials at electoral events appears to attract an audience primarily for this reason even in the most established of communities. Indicative of this is the fact some of the inhabitants of Helwan, Egypt's largest and most established industrial area for example, utilised a major NDP electoral event for purposes not too dissimilar to the inhabitants of Hike Step.

Formal NDP event at Helwan Youth Club³⁷³

The event in question was arranged for the four NDP contestants nominated for Helwan's two electoral constituencies (electoral constituency twenty four and electoral constituency twenty five). As an NDP event, the candidates were provided with exclusive access to the pleasant, state-owned, Helwan Youth Club. The four candidates representing the two consituencies comprised the Minister of War Productions Muhammad Al-Ghamrawi, the then Minister of Religious Endowments Muhammad Mahjub in the fe'at category. The two 'amel candidates were Mustafa Munji

³⁷¹ Personal Interview, Hike Step, 18 November 1995.

³⁷² Deputy Governor Muhammad Al-Jawahirji to audience at Hike Step gathering, 18 November 1995.

³⁷³ The following information all derived from personal attendance of the electoral event held at Helwan Youth Club on 25 November 1995.

and Muhammad Mustafa. The guest speakers supporting these four candidates included senior government and state officials such as Mohyi Al-Din 'Abd Al-Latif, Treasurer of the Cairo branch of the NDP, the Minister of Public Enterprise, Dr 'Atef 'Obayd, and the Governor of Cairo, General 'Omar 'Abd Al-'Akahar.

In a similar situation to that witnessed at the Hike Step event, the stage where the guest speakers were seated became surrounded with individuals attempting to pass written petitions to the official guests. The crowd, which comprised no less than one hundred people, not only blocked the view of the front seat audience, but delayed the start of the electoral propaganda speeches by approximately one hour. It would seem the ministerial security and the attending members of the NDP Women's Group accelerated the process by collecting most of the petitions and promising to pass them to the relevant official. Illustrative of the petitioners was a worker who had been employed in a military parts factory for the last fifteen years. Discovering the Minister of War Productions would be campaigning that day, the worker decided to come and present to the Minister a petition. According^{to} the worker, he was requesting the Minister's authorisation for his unemployed, diploma holding, twenty year old son to be recruited at the factory where he is employed.³⁷⁴

Apart from individual petitions, members of the audience brought up communal concerns which were not directly linked to the issue of the elections. One example of this was the opening hours of the local subsidised bakeries. The subsidised bakeries in the area, it would appear, had began a curious policy of closing at two o'clock in the afternoon. The main consequence being that the workers were unable to buy their bread on the way home from work. The formal electoral gathering in the Helwan Youth Club

³⁷⁴ Personal Interview with the petitioner "Abu Ahmad", 25 November, 1995, Helwan.

therefore, appears to have been viewed by the workers as an opportunity to air their concerns on the topic to those in authority. The Minister of Religious Endowments as it turned out, promised the audience that the bakery problem "would be solved by tomorrow". The Minister of Public Enterprise also reaffirmed the Bakery problem would be swiftly resolved.

In view of the type of public communication and interaction illustrated above, one can argue that the privileges conferred upon NDP candidates during electoral campaigns is advantageous in that it allows the party to expand and strengthen its links with the masses. This however, does not appear to be the case. The written petitions that are submitted to candidates and senior officials during electoral campaigns for example, are predominately straightforward applications for jobs, transfers, or simply individuals seeking an authority figure to intervene in a bureaucratic problem on their behalf. In other words, requests which can contribute extensively towards enhancing the party's links with the masses and which require little effort on the part of officials. Yet, it would appear that the officials to whom the petitions are directed, are not inclined to respond with even a letter of acknowledgement to the claimants.

This, it would seem, is because such petitions are predominantly thrown away without even being read. During the NDP gathering at the Helwan Youth Club for example, one member of the NDP Women's Group confided the petitions which she and her colleagues helped to gather on behalf of the senior attending officials were to be discarded as soon as the event was over. Asked if they could get into trouble with their superiors for discarding the applications in their possession, she laughed as did a colleague sitting next to her. In fact, the middle aged bureaucrat proclaimed that this was part of their duties during such events. In her words:

"Do you think we all come to these events by choice? There is no choice. We came because the organisers needed the front rows occupied so that there is a buffer between the workers and the Ministers... We are also here to help collect the petitions because there is always a lot of them at these election events. After we collect them we throw them away ... We don't like doing that, but this is how it works."³⁷⁵

The point therefore, is that strategies of this nature do little to assist the campaign efforts of a candidate. Indeed, such unresponsiveness on the part of senior government and state officials does not seem to deter many individuals who are perhaps extremely desperate for assistance. This however, does not imply the majority of voters are oblivious to governmental tactics of this nature. This, one can argue, is perhaps why it seems necessary to lure them into attending formal NDP electoral campaigns.

Ensuring an audience

In view of the above assumption, it would seem that the luring of an audience predominantly takes two forms: employment pressure and financial inducement. In the first instance upper public sector managers are 'invited' to attend and support to NDP candidate(s) at electoral gathering held in their respective localities. In turn, the managers inform the middle level bureaucrats whom they manage to show their support by also attending. What this means is that the majority of those informed turn up, not out of interest or choice, but out of fear that their absence might be noticed by their colleagues and superiors.

An electoral event held by NDP candidate, Muhammad Al-Sayyed, prior to the 1995 legislative elections illustrates some of the features of this predicament.³⁷⁶ The event in

³⁷⁵ Personal interview with member of the NDP Women's Group, Helwan Youth Club, 25 November 1995.

³⁷⁶ Information derived from personal attendance of event, 26 November 1995.

question took place in Hada'iq al-Qooba, the electoral constituency Muhammad Al-Sayyed has been representing in the People's Assembly since 1990. The event was arranged to be held in two consecutive places. At approximately seven in the evening, we arrived with Al-Sayyed, an ex-football player and a local of the constituency, at *Jam'eyyat Tanmeyat al-Mojtama'*, a state owned and run building intended to provide the locals with advice and guidance on social service related matters. The plan was that Al-Sayyed would give a speech to the local women before moving on to the other location.

Inside the large room sat approximately two hundred women. The social contrast between the women was difficult to overlook. In the front row for example, sat rather elegantly dressed women who seemed slightly out of place in a working class area such as Hada'iq al-Qooba. In the row immediately behind them sat women, who to judge from their outward appearance seemed to fit the category of lower level state bureaucrats. The majority of women however were in the back rows, and judging from the predominantly black *jalabeyyas* (long gowns) which they wore, held little more than menial jobs, if at all.

These *jalabeyya* dressed women, it would seem, were returning favours for the *Jam'eyya* staff whose assistance they regularly seek and who in turn, had 'invited' them to attend.³⁷⁷ It also emerged that the front row women comprised both the wives of senior bureaucrats who came on behalf of their husbands, and senior bureaucrats who came in their formal capacity of representatives of the NDP Women's Group. The women located in the middle rows were indeed state employees representing both the local knitwear factory and the *Jam'eyya* where the event was taking place. According to Nevin, an administrator at the factory, she

³⁷⁷ This information was initially derived from Salah, Al-Sayyed's nephew and assistant, 26 November 1995.

attended the gathering because like her colleagues, she was asked to do so by a senior manager. As she put it:

"We were told that the General Manager of our factory would be a guest speaker today. We had the choice of coming here, to the women only gathering, or going to the event where the Manager would be speaking. I chose here because it starts first and then I can go home early to the children... [pointing at the front row women] if they weren't here, all of us [from the factory] would have gone to the other event otherwise no-one [i.e. work superiors] would have known we were present... what is the point of coming if nobody sees us?"³⁷⁸

Perhaps due to the above reason for attendance, the atmosphere at that gathering appeared rather formal and strained. Indeed, most of the women, excluding those in the front row, chanted slogans such as "*hanintikhib min? Muḥammad Sayyed! wa ḥabibkum min? Muḥammad Sayyed*" (who will we elect? Muḥammad Sayyed! and who do you love? Muḥammad Sayyed!) However, that the gathering appeared a superficial demonstration of support can be detected in the bored expressions of the women's faces whilst being addressed. Moreover, the chanting at the end of the gathering lasted only a few minutes before the women abruptly quietened down and swiftly made their exit.

The second location of the evening was not too dissimilar in terms of atmosphere. Held in a *khama* (tent) located a few minutes walk from the *Jam'eyya*, the gathering was however more subdued. This it would seem, was because the audience (approximately three hundred men and women who were predominantly administrative employees from the knitwear factory) did not appear so eager to chant slogans of support for the candidate. In fact, the audience appeared very bored and uncomfortable as they unenthusiastically acknowledged each speaker with a weak applause at the start of an address.

³⁷⁸ Personal interview, 26 November 1995.

The extent to which the audience seemed uninterested was evident when most of them got up to leave prior to the last speaker taking the microphone. Whilst it would seem the speeches were presumed over, it is interesting to note that even when the speaker took to the microphone, most of them still ignored him and left. The unfortunate speaker was left with an audience of less than fifty. The most logical conclusion derived from this situation was that the audience continued to leave even after realising there was a final speaker because: (i) their General Manager and his entourage had slipped away a short time earlier, and (ii) they did not recognise the final guest speaker and therefore assumed (rightly) that he was not a senior official and therefore did not possess power over them.³⁷⁹

That manual workers at the knitwear factory were conspicuous by their absence at the above gathering leads us to the second point regarding the nature of formal NDP electoral campaigns. In contrast to bureaucrats, it would appear that state employees in the manual workers category are less prepared to attend such events simply because they are instructed to do so by their superiors. The reason for this could be that these individuals have less to lose in terms of career prospects if they disobey the management. It could also be that senior state officials do not place excessive pressure for them to attend for fear of risking friction or even riots. What appears evident however, is that workers not only appear to have a realistic grasp of the organisation of formal electoral campaigns for NDP candidates, but are also less willing to act the role of passive audience in the same manner as their higher ranking colleagues in the public sector. As one worker asserted following one such gathering:

"All these important speakers and outsiders
[referring to the bureaucratic-looking

³⁷⁹ The speaker in question was indeed rather insignificant in that he was not an important official. He was apparently a supporter of al-Sayyed and had come simply to present a gratitude type of speech based on how al-Sayyed assisted him during a family crisis. Personal observation.

members of the audience which include members of the NDP Women's group and what appears to be their male counter-parts] they are all here because they have to attend. They must all show support to the Party. Not out of choice, but because they are all *fi khedmat al-Dawla* (at the service of the state). We [the local workers] came because we want to know when they will provide us with some basic services in this place!"³⁸⁰

The problems faced by both old and new working class areas in particular, arguably ensures that a proportion of the local workers do turn up to formal NDP events in order to question officials on communal matters or to present them with personal petitions. It would appear however that because workers are less inclined to attend such events simply to act as an audience, it is not uncommon to provide them with financial inducements to ensure their turn-out. This situation was explained by a group of workers from one of Helwan's military factories. During the one month authorised for electoral campaigning, according to the self-designated spokesman of the group:

"... we find empty coaches waiting outside the factory after work. The other factories in the area also get coaches after work. But we do not get them everyday, just two or three times a week. When we see the coaches outside we know that the government needs us to cheer for its election candidates at some place or other... its up to each person if he wants to board the coach or go home, but usually no-one minds going. Actually we like going because we know that as soon as we board the coach the driver will give us ten pounds each...Before he drives off, he tells us where we're going and who to cheer for so that we are prepared."³⁸¹

Observing these workers chant slogans of support, cheer and clap during that particular gathering, one could easily

³⁸⁰ Personal Interview, factory worker, Hike Step, 18 Nov. 1995.

³⁸¹ Personal Interview with factory worker attending with colleagues the NDP electoral event held at the Helwan Youth Club, 25 November 1995.

presume this was a genuine projection of support for the candidates and their guest speakers. It is interesting therefore to discover that they (and presumably this was not a unique occasion) were effectively rented for the occasion.

In the final analysis, what this means is that whilst extensive gatherings of the nature discussed above constitute a privilege conferred on NDP nominated contestants, it would be erroneous to view the audience turn-out as an indication of either the extent of the contestant's popularity or the size of the NDP's base of support. Indeed, the vision of hundreds of people attending an NDP electoral campaign might appear on surface impressive and perhaps unfair compared to the more modest formal events organised by opposition parties for their candidates. Yet the attendance of large audiences does not necessarily provide NDP candidates with a significant advantage over their opposition counter-parts. This is not simply because the disparate reasons which appear to induce such turn-outs strongly suggest an absence of genuine voter support at such events. But also because there is little evidence to suggest the NDP as an organisation, is concerned that these reasons are not directly linked to genuine electoral support.

It should be noted that NDP candidates also seem aware of the above predicament. Indicative of this is the observation of Muhammad Al-Sayyed, the NDP's candidate for Hada'iq al-Qobba. According to personal experience and knowledge of his constituency, he expected only a fraction of those who attend his gatherings to actually vote on election day. According to him, out of approximately eighty thousand eligible voters residing in the constituency:

"...no more than twenty thousand are registered voters... Even with about twenty thousand voters, we [implying all the candidates competing in the constituency]

will be very lucky if eleven thousand turn up to vote."³⁸²

In terms of the public sector employees who attend his formal gatherings, he was aware that "not all of them reside in the constituency" and that in the case of "...those who are registered here, no-one can force them to vote."³⁸³ The same view also appears to be held by potential voters. As one Helwan factory worker argued:

" A lot of people might be brought in to attend all these government election events. But the government can't make you turn-up to vote. If they do, how can they be sure you vote for their candidates? you can vote for whoever you want, they won't know who voted for who."³⁸⁴

The inadequacy of formal NDP events in terms of voter recruitment is perhaps better illustrated through the sceptical comments of one factory worker following the Helwan Youth Club gathering discussed previously. At that gathering, the Minister of Public Enterprises concluded his speech by informing the audience that "this year we will be giving a pay rise for all our workers in Helwan... it is in gratitude for all the hard work we have achieved..."³⁸⁵ The worker's response was: "Who is he trying to fool by telling us this at election time, we are not getting the pay-rise because they are charitable or good. We are getting it because we have not had one for over two years. So it is our due, that's the law, nothing more, nothing less!"³⁸⁶

³⁸² Personal Interview, 26 November 1995.

³⁸³ Ibid..

³⁸⁴ Personal Interview following an election event for Mostafa Bakri at Mayo area of Helwan, 22 November 1995.

³⁸⁵ 'Atef 'Obayd, Minister of Public Enterprises, 25 Nov. 1995.

³⁸⁶ Remark during personal interview with group of Helwan factory workers, 25 November 1995.

4.2 (b) Formal Electoral Participation:

opposition candidates

That public campaigning seems to be of little assistance in terms of recruiting voters for NDP candidates, is a predicament that appears to be faced to an even greater extent by candidates representing opposition parties. This is because in the case of the participating opposition, the inability to generate mass support through formal electoral participation is due to more complex constraints to that encountered by NDP candidates.

Campaign gatherings, it should be noted, cannot formally take place under the state of emergency without prior permission from the Ministry of Interior. What this means is that if a candidate plans to hold a public gathering, he is formally required to submit an application to the local police station stating details such as the date and approximate location of the intended campaign gathering. The application is then officially passed to the Ministry of Interior, where it is then decided whether permission will be granted or withheld. Whilst NDP candidates, for logical reasons, do not encounter major difficulties in gaining permits to hold their respective gatherings, the situation for opposition candidates is not as simple and straightforward an affair.

The most conspicuous aspect in relation to the authorisation of election gatherings is perhaps the nature of site allocations. In contrast to NDP candidates, opposition candidates are rarely allowed access to youth clubs, halls or other state-owned property in which to conduct their gatherings. Instead, when political opponents are granted permits to hold such events, it is not uncommon for the authorities to allocate them sites which constitute little more than alley-ways located in difficult to reach areas. To illustrate the nature of such sites and the implications they appear to have for a candidate's campaign, we will take the example of a formal gathering

authorised for Neo-Wafd candidate, No'man Jom'a, during the 1995 elections.

Jom'a and the 'Hayy al-Munira al-Gharbeyya' gathering

As a contestant for the *fe'at* seat in the electoral constituency of Imbaba, No'man Jom'a, the Neo-Wafd's deputy-chairman, had applied for permission to hold twenty formal gatherings during the one month authorised for election campaigning. According to 'Abir, one of his personal campaign assistants, one of the main problems with this arrangement is that whilst the authorities had yet to deny them permission to hold any of the gatherings, it is routine procedure not to be notified of a formal decision except on the day a gathering is intended to take place.³⁸⁷ What this means is that 'Abir and her fellow co-workers are given a few hours to find the designated location, hire a *Khama*, arrange the installation of a microphone system, and notify supporters and locals of both the event and location.

On the evening which the 'Hayy al-Munira al-Gharbeyya' gathering was to be held, the haste in arrangements was detected even at the hired office which Jom'a was using as his campaign headquarters in Imbaba. To start with, none of the people present seemed to know the directions to the intended destination. After about half an hour of uncertainty and waiting, it was eventually decided that those with cars (Jom'a and a few of his friends/supporters) would follow the mini-bus which was carrying approximately twenty campaign assistants and supporters. Accompanied by 'Abir and another of her colleagues, we subsequently followed the mini-bus out of the main roads in Imbaba and into a maze of small alley-ways.

It is perhaps an understatement to note that Hayy al-Munira al-Gharbeyya was difficult to reach. We not only found ourselves lost in many dead-end alley-ways, but also, these

³⁸⁷ Personal Interview, 19 November 1995.

alley-ways were so narrow that on several occasions the mini-bus got stuck in them. In addition to this complex and arduous route, we arrived at the Khama over an hour later to find it crammed in a small alley-way directly next to another Khama in which a local wedding celebration was taking place.³⁸⁸

The loud music emitted by the neighbouring wedding meant that it was impossible for Jom'a to give a speech to the small audience that had gathered to listen and enjoy his hospitality of free soft drinks. Exasperated by this predicament, Jom'a eventually decided to go and introduce himself, congratulate the bride and groom and, present them with a noqta³⁸⁹ in the hope this would encourage them to turn the music down. The plan did appear to work, because the wedding music was abruptly switched off thus allowing Jom'a to start his speech. However, it seems Jom'a was aware he had to make his speech brief so that the neighbouring celebrations could be resumed. Consequently, with a mixture of frustration and irony he told his audience:

"It is a pleasure to be here among you all ... I would first like to congratulate the bride and groom next door. It must be a sign of good luck for us to be so near a happy occasion like this. We should therefore thank the Minister of Interior and the police officers for they are the reason we are here today.." ³⁹⁰

³⁸⁸ In both working class districts and rural areas of Egypt, it is not uncommon practice for wedding celebrations (and post-funeral congregation) to take place in a Khama in the street so that as many guests as possible could be accommodated. This is largely because the close-knit nature of such communities means that weddings and funerals are regarded as communal affairs which the entire neighbourhood are invited/expected to attend.

³⁸⁹ A 'Noqta' is money traditionally given to a bride and groom instead of a wedding present. In this case, Jom'a presented them with one hundred Egyptian pounds- a large sum considering his position as a stranger to the couple. Personal observation, 19 November 1995.

³⁹⁰ No'man Jom'a, 19 November 1995.

Almost ten minutes later, the wedding music was resumed thus compelling Jom'a to thank his audience once more before making an exit with his assistants in tow. It was impossible, given the distractions, for Jom'a to continue any further. Hence, the fact Jom'a was not given an opportunity to communicate at length with the audience, meant that he was subsequently unable to project his views and thus potentially expand his base of support.

The obstacles and efforts Jom'a and his assistants experienced, as well as the financial costs (which included hiring the mini-bus, the *Khama* and the micro-phone system, and also the purchasing of a large quantity of soft drinks and giving a *noqta* to the bride and groom) strongly suggest that the overall costs concurred did not realistically justify what, in the final analysis, was little more than a tense fifteen minute address to an audience of less than fifty.

It should be noted however, that for opposition candidates, gaining formal permission to hold electoral gatherings, appears to be largely dependent upon the relationship between the government and the party which the candidate officially represents. Hence, in the case of Jom'a, one can argue that obstacles aside, he was not actually refused permission to hold formal gatherings because his party, the Neo-Wafd, appears to have conceded that participation in elections is not to gain power but to: "buy some space in the political landscape."³⁹¹

Interacting with the public: selective constraints

In the case of opposition parties that do not particularly share the above view (currently the Muslim Brotherhood, the Labour Party and the newly established Nasserite Party) the permission to hold formal election gatherings seems to be

³⁹¹ Ambassador Tahsin Bashir, retired Egyptian diplomat and political analyst, relaying a personal conversation with Neo-Wafd Chairman, Fu'ad Seraj Al-Din. Personal Interview, Cairo, 14 December 1994.

automatically denied to their respective contestants. According to Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, the Muslim Brotherhood's 1995 nominee for the electoral constituency of Hada'iq al-Qobba, the constituency's chief of police (*al-Ma'mur*) had warned him at the start of the campaigning period that because of the prevailing state of emergency, he had been given specific "orders from the presidential office to prevent any candidate from holding election gatherings".³⁹² Obviously the implementation of these "orders" was selective. Otherwise it would be difficult to explain how, in the very same constituency, the NDP's Muhammad Al-Sayyed held public electoral gatherings such as those noted earlier in the chapter.

In the electoral constituency of Doqqi, another Brotherhood candidate, Ma'mun Al-Hudhaybi, encountered similar constraints. When we first interviewed him at what was then the official Muslim Brotherhood headquarters in central Cairo, he mentioned that only the previous day, he and "a few young Brothers" came out of a Doqqi mosque following Friday Prayers to find five vans full of policemen parked outside. Upon enquiring as to the reason for this conspicuous presence, he replied:

"Of-course [the authorities] knew we must attend Friday Prayers. But they were worried because we are not allowed to hold election gatherings. They thought that we will use the mosque to hold a gathering with the congregation after the prayers...it was totally unnecessary to deploy five police vans but they wanted to make sure everyone dispersed immediately after the prayers... the message was very clear."³⁹³

Placing police officers outside mosques it seems, was not only aimed at preventing Muslim Brotherhood contestants from holding unauthorised gatherings, but also aimed at contestants representing the party most linked to the

³⁹² Personal Interview, 11 November 1995.

³⁹³ Personal Interview, 11 November 1995.

Muslim Brotherhood, the Labour Party. In the first week of November 1995 for example, 'Adel Husayn, a senior member of the Labour Party, and its then candidate for the electoral constituency of Madinat Nasr, faced a similar predicament to Al-Hudhaybi following Friday Prayers. However, it would seem that in that particular case, the police decided to disperse the congregation swiftly and thus entered the mosque immediately after prayers. The consequence of such eagerness being that a scuffle broke out leading to six arrests. The Labour Party candidate and his assistants, it should be noted, had already become familiar with police tactics of this nature because they had previously experienced three similar incidents.³⁹⁴

That the Labour Party and the Nasserite Party were not permitted to hold elections gatherings was also evident in the fact that like the Muslim Brotherhood, their main method of making contact with the public at large rested upon personal walkabouts, coffee-house visits and the distribution of election material. The adoption of such tactics however always carries the risk of arrest and prosecution since the prevailing state of emergency is not formally lifted during the one month campaign period. It is simply that the government chooses to allow most contestants to overlook it. A simple illustration of this is the fact that during the election period, the streets in urban Egypt are covered with banners and posters advertising the various contestants who are competing in the respective areas.

Yet, the presence of such conspicuous material reflects the conscious decision of the authorities to ignore the publicity tactics of contestants. If the authorities chose to implement emergency measures during this period however, then it would be difficult for contestants to pursue this form of advertisement because the handling or erecting of

³⁹⁴ Personal interview with 'Ahmad Solayman Muhammad, Labour Party member and campaign assistant to 'Adel Husayn, 13 November 1995.

such material in public places would subject the individuals concerned to instant arrest. The point therefore is that having actually experienced the arrest of various assistants in such circumstances,³⁹⁵ (circumstances which one must stress, is common procedure that does not involve personal contact with the public and is otherwise overlooked for other candidates) one can thus comprehend the risk these contestants take when participating in unauthorised personal communication with the public.

In view of the risk of being arrested and perhaps as a consequence, being forced to withdraw from electoral competition, the tactics of unauthorised personal walkabouts, coffee-house visits and the distribution of election propaganda cannot therefore be regarded as efficient methods of voter recruitment. This, for a start, is because contestants participating in such activities must remain constantly on the move to avoid being caught by the police. In turn, it is difficult for potential voters to become familiar with a candidate if he is simply 'passing' through. Illustrative of the nature and inadequacy of adopting these tactics is the campaign efforts of Labour Party candidate, 'Adel Husayn.

Unauthorised public interaction:
some shortcomings

Since the start of the 1995 election campaign month, 'Adel Husayn decided, as compensation for being denied formal permission to hold electoral gatherings, to use Monday and Friday evenings to walk around the constituency, meeting members of the general public. On Monday the 13th of

³⁹⁵ According to Ma'mun Al-Hudhaybi for example, five of his assistants were awaiting their lawyers in jail because on the evening of the 10th of November they were arrested for "putting up posters" in his Doqqi constituency. Personal interview, 11 November 1995. In another example, several assistants for, and including two brothers of Sayyed Hussayn Sha'ban - the Nasserite Party candidate for the electoral constituency of Al-Manyal- were arrested for the same reason. They did however get released from jail nine hours later. Personal Interview with Sha'ban, 9 November 1995.

November, we joined him on one such walk-about. Meeting him at his home at 6.p.m he was unaware of the route that was to be taken that evening. Instead Husayn confirmed that his first route would be to a mosque in Heliopolis where he wanted to perform the Maghreb (early evening) prayers.

After we waited in his car for about fifteen minutes, Husayn eventually emerged from the mosque accompanied by ten other men. These men it turned out, were Husayn's designated guides and assistants. It later emerged that they comprised an equal combination of junior Labour Party members and junior Muslim Brotherhood members.³⁹⁶

The planned route, as it emerged, was to start near the College for Girls, reach the Marwa Buildings area and back again to the College for Girls area. During the three and a half hour journey, Husayn entered most of the local shops en route, shaking hands with customers and shop keepers whilst his assistants distributed the simple pamphlets. Probably due to the fact this was a predominantly upper middle class residential area, the atmosphere was rather subdued and the streets were rather empty at that time. One of the most noticeable aspects of the walk-about however, was the fact that most of the people encountered appeared to be taken by surprise. With the assistants distributing pamphlets and Husayn shaking their hands whilst repeating the same words: "you must vote, use your votes against the thieves, you know what I mean, you know what is wrong and right", there did not seem to be enough time for those approached to gather their thoughts before the entourage moved on.

At one point during this walk-about, we reached a coffee-shop whose owner was apparently familiar with Husayn. He

³⁹⁶ Interestingly, the Muslim Brotherhood influence on the Labour Party was apparent not only by the presence of their members, but also in the leaflets planned for distribution. The leaflets, which carried Husayn's name and picture carried the famous Brotherhood slogan: "Islam is the Solution."

therefore invited him to give a speech to the customers whilst he prepared some refreshments for the group. With this invitation, Husayn began to address the coffee-shop clients by urging them to: "be united and vote on election day" so that "the polling station is kept busy and the [government] officials will not have time to fill out the empty forms." However, before he could continue, a young officer, apparently having just completed his work shift, entered the coffee-house, ordered a drink and sat in a discreet corner. Even though the coffee-shop owner assured him there would be no problems because the officer was a "local boy", Husayn abruptly ended his speech and decided it was best to move on. The remainder of the evening subsequently finished as it started, in a hasty walk-about.

As Husayn's walk-about illustrates, it is difficult for a contestant to purposefully interact with potential voters, when, at the same time, he must constantly be vigilant of the authorities. The extent to which the constant vigilance of contestants negatively affects the quality of their walk-about was perhaps best illustrated during one particular walk-about. The walk-about in question involved Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, whom we mentioned previously, was the Muslim Brotherhood's 1995 nominee for the working class district of Hada'iq al-Qobba.

As with Husayn, 'Akif and his assistants decided to pray at the local mosque before starting the walk-about.³⁹⁷ Upon approaching the mosque, we found one uniformed and two officers in civilian clothes sitting outside drinking coffee. As 'Akif acknowledged them upon departure from the mosque, he mentioned that the authorities decided to have the mosque monitored daily because he was a regular and presumably did not want him to hold any electoral gatherings inside. Also, to avoid trouble, he chose to remain a regular attendant because if he stopped, he

³⁹⁷ The following information derived during personal attendance the walk-about on 15 November 1995.

believed the police would get angry, search for him elsewhere and then, they would "never leave me alone".³⁹⁸ 'Akif therefore, appeared to view his daily attendance at that mosque as a sort of 'sign-in' whereby the authorities would be reassured of his whereabouts and the fact he was not campaigning inside.

The walk-about - which did not differ significantly from Husayn's except for the fact the streets in Hada'iq al-Qobba were bustling with people - began once we reached a safe distance from the mosque and the officers. 'Akif's encounters with members of the public comprised little more than handshakes and reminders that "Islam was the Solution". At one particular stage however, 'Akif had just entered a *makwaji*'s (clothes ironer) workshop and before he could acknowledge any of the workers, an aide appeared from what seemed like nowhere and told 'Akif they were being followed by police in civilian clothes. Within seconds, everyone dispersed, leaving a startled and perhaps even frightened work shop of ironers.³⁹⁹

Fortunately for the group, the walk-about was resumed shortly afterwards because the crowded environment of the area meant they did not have too much trouble losing the officer. The point however, is that electoral walk-about cannot realistically be expected to serve any significant function in terms of contestant-voter relations, especially when incidents of this nature are constantly looming over a contestant's shoulders.

Indeed, one can argue that the informal coalition that has continued between the Muslim Brotherhood and Labour Party since 1987, and their apparent refusal to accept the political status-quo, renders them a sufficiently serious electoral challenge to the government to the extent it sees

³⁹⁸ Personal interview, 15 November 1995.

³⁹⁹ It should be noted that the abruptness in which the Islamic group dispersed meant that we were left stranded and one of 'Akif's aides had to subsequently return and find us.

the need to impose severe participatory restrictions. This compels them to interact with the public through electoral walk-about and other forms of unauthorised campaigning. What is worth noting however, is that contestants representing opposition parties that can be considered less challenging and, arguably, co-opted by the government, also appear inclined to adopt similar campaign strategies.

As we attempted to illustrate using the example of No'man Jom'a, it is not uncommon for opposition contestants to be granted, at very short notice, formal authorisation to hold election gatherings that are subsequently located in undesirable locations. Such strategies on the part of the authorities, logically discourage contestants from seeking formal permits to hold their respective gatherings. An even more discouraging strategy however, is when the authorities decide to completely ignore a contestant's application. In doing so, the applicant is subsequently forced to cancel the intended gathering for fear the information submitted in the application, in conjunction with the absence of a permit, would provide ample ammunition for a police raid if the event went ahead. Hence, it is largely due to this predicament that resorting to unauthorised public interaction is not a procedure confined only to certain sectors of the opposition.

Illustrative of the above assumption was some of the campaign strategies adopted by contestants such as Fatheyya Al-'Assal of the Tajammu' and the Liberal Party's Mustafa Bakri. Al-'Assal, who, during the 1995 elections, competed in the electoral constituency of Imbaba, chose for example, to relinquish authorised electoral gatherings altogether, and instead, interact with members of the public through walk-about and informal speeches arranged at local coffee-houses.⁴⁰⁰ Bakri, on the other hand, focused much attention on speaking at organised gatherings which attracted large

⁴⁰⁰ Personal interview and observation of Al- 'Assal on 6,7 and 8 November 1995.

audiences, but were, again officially unauthorised activities.⁴⁰¹

Arguably, candidates such as those mentioned above did not appear to suffer dire consequences as a result of pursuing unauthorised campaigning because they represent parties that had, as we discussed previously, indicated their co-operation with government and also their distance from the Muslim Brotherhood, prior to, and during, the 1995 legislative elections. Nevertheless, the fact that certain candidates are not pursued by the police during unauthorised election activities, does not necessarily imply such activities are particularly advantageous in terms of voter recruitment.

Indeed, judging from personal observations throughout the 1995 election period, members of the public, especially those from urban working class areas, generally appeared to show some interest when meeting and listening to what various opposition contestants had to say. Yet showing interest in a candidate's presence and actually voting for that candidate are two factors which are separate and distinct. As an audience member argued following one campaign gathering:

"Every candidate promises to change the area if he gets elected... After work, we go home and eat and then go to the coffee-house to have a drink and chat with our friends. But during the elections we have a break from the normal routine...sometimes we go and listen to an opposition candidate and sometimes they come to visit us at the coffee-house... Their views are sometimes very interesting. But even if we agree with the views of one contestant, this is not reason enough to vote for him. To vote for someone, you must know who he is so that if you need a favour you will know where to find him... it's silly to vote for a

⁴⁰¹ According to Bakri, over sixty such gatherings were held during the campaign period. Personal interview, 20 December 1995.

complete stranger because if he wins you
will never see him again ..."⁴⁰²

These words bring us to arguably the most important point about the limitations of public campaigning whether they be authorised or unauthorised: activities of this nature are of little significance when contestants have the problem of insufficient support from their respective parties. Insufficient support includes the reassurance of some form of party base in the constituency where a seat is being sought. Whilst this may appear a logical assumption, it would seem that this is not an uncommon issue in Egypt's contemporary multi-party arena.

4.3 Insufficient Party Support:

the NDP and the legalised opposition

Party candidates, one would assume, should be in a more advantageous position than, for example, independent candidates, if only for the material and organisational support one would expect them to obtain from their parties during electoral competition. Yet, in Egypt's multi-party arena, it would seem that the formally unrecognised Muslim Brotherhood constitutes the sole participating organisation which adheres to such logic. The overall nature of Muhammad 'Akif's 1995 electoral campaign in Hada'iq al-Qobba provides an apt illustration of the type of support the Muslim Brotherhood extends to its candidates.

Brotherhood support: one candidate's case

The constraints imposed by the authorities on participating Brotherhood contestants appear to have led to the adoption of spontaneous and arguably futile forms of public campaigning such as informal walk-about. It should be noted however, that to compensate for this predicament, the Muslim Brotherhood appears to provide its candidates with a strong support system. In 'Akif's case for example, he was, for the 1995 elections, provided with a temporarily rented

⁴⁰² Personal interview, 'Amin Isma'il, school teacher attending Mostafa Bakri gathering in Helwan, 14 November 1995.

office in a well presented apartment block in Hada'iq al-Qobba, the constituency in which he was competing. This office, which was spacious and contained modern equipment such as a telephone, computer and facsimile machine, was intended as a base for 'Akif to discuss campaign strategies with other Brotherhood members, as well as store election propaganda.⁴⁰³

The importance of maintaining such an office during the electoral period is not to present potential voters with a local site which could be easily identified and located. This, one can argue, is not necessary because the presence of social projects such as the religious school funded and run by the Muslim Brotherhood for the locals, constitutes the equivalent of a permanent base in the area. The office therefore, was allotted to 'Akif and the Brotherhood members specifically involved in his electoral campaign. In view of the fact 'Akif was provided with no less than one hundred assistants, the necessity of such a base is understandable.

These assistants, it is worth noting, were, prior to the start of the election campaign, personally unfamiliar with 'Akif, and vice versa. What this means, is that their participation in his campaign was not tied to obligation or support for the candidate on a personal level, but for the Muslim Brotherhood as a group entity. The intensity of support these assistants portrayed to the organisation in which they are members is well reflected for example, in the case of one assistant. This assistant who, like the majority of his colleagues was a local resident of Hada'iq al-Qobba, put on hold his Master's Degree in engineering, so that he could help the campaign efforts of a contestant with whom he was personally unfamiliar, and whose only link to him was as a fellow member of the organisation.

⁴⁰³ Personal observation, 15 November 1995.

The role of the student, along with seventy-nine other local Brotherhood members focused primarily on door-to-door canvassing. This campaign technique was simplified because as a registered candidate (formally: independent), 'Akif was allowed police access to the names and addresses of the constituency's eighty thousand or so adult residents. Consequently, being local residents themselves and thus familiar with the area and the people, the eighty young men were each given a list of approximately one thousand people to visit at home. The purpose of this was two-fold.

First, those on the electoral register were to be persuaded to vote for the Brotherhood on election day. Second, those residents who were not registered to vote (and according to both 'Akif and the NDP's Muḥammad Al- Sayyed, that constitutes the majority of residents), were to be persuaded to do so by the assistants and subsequently helped with the obligatory paper work. Since assistance of this nature would require Brotherhood members to interact several times with the potential voter, the gratitude, or at least familiarity, which emerges as a consequence, is intended to ensure that a proportion of them become recruited as supporters of the organisation.

In addition to helping household members to register, discussing religious ideology and distributing election material, the Brotherhood campaigners are also expected to present each household with token gifts. Gifts such as Qur'anic verses, Islamic theme calendars and, a range of Islamic theme stationery for the children.

The process of providing stationery for children is also extended to schools. Subsequently another, albeit, smaller group of young Brotherhood members were assigned the task of waiting outside local schools when the pupils came out with the sole purpose of distributing rulers, pencils, erasers, sharpeners and exercise books all printed with the slogan "Islam is the Solution" and the occasional verse from the Qur'an.

Targeting children with stationary gifts, according to 'Akif, is considered an important aspect of Brotherhood campaign activities, especially in poor areas such as Hada'iq al-Qobba. This, as he maintains, is because for poor parents, the purchasing of stationery for their children is very much a burden on their already strained budget. Consequently, by providing children with these token objects, the parents would see the Brotherhood slogan and remember that the organisation is sympathetic to their circumstances. Even if the parents are not affected by this gesture, 'Akif maintains that his organisation's efforts would not be in vain. This, as he argues is because the Muslim Brotherhood also has:

"a programme for the recruitment of children...from those at primary school to those at the secondary and university level of their education... if parents do not respond to us, children are still going to remember who gave them goodies at the school gates and hopefully this means our message is being slowly passed to the next generation directly...we are not in a hurry, our plans are very long term."⁴⁰⁴

'Akif's campaign strategy as outlined above, strongly reflects the existence of group cohesion. It would seem that 'Akif, and arguably all Brotherhood contestants, receive sufficient support from the Muslim Brotherhood for campaigning not to be focused on a personalistic level but on a group level. The fact the Brotherhood funds all the campaign costs of its candidates, encourages its junior members to play an active role in assisting the contestants, and ensures that campaign literature emphasises the contestants not as an individual personalities who happen to be Brotherhood members, but first and foremost as representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood, all indicate this to be the case.

⁴⁰⁴ Personal Interview with 'Akif, 15 November 1995.

That the legalised opposition does not appear to possess the type of group cohesion found within the Muslim Brotherhood organisation on the other hand, can be detected in the seemingly insufficient assistance and organisational support extended to their candidates. It is worth pointing out for example, that the Muslim Brotherhood does not receive or presumably expect, its long-standing ally, the Labour Party, to provide it with party members to help with the electoral campaigns of its candidates. In contrast, the presence of Muslim Brotherhood members during the electoral activities of Labour Party contestants is evident. An ample illustration being that when one of the Labour Party's most senior members, 'Adel Husayn, decided to enter the electoral competition for the first time in 1995, he campaigned, as mentioned previously, with the help of Muslim Brotherhood members. If the Labour Party provided sufficient support to its electoral candidates, one would assume that as senior member, Husayn would not have accepted the assistance of an organisation which he does not represent.

The issue of finance

That contestants representing the legalised parties appear to lack sufficient support from their parties, is however, more prominently reflected in the campaign framework of these contestants. It would seem that, in contrast to Brotherhood contestants, opposition and NDP candidates alike, appear to personally finance a large part of their own electoral campaigns. If, for example, we look at those party candidates whom we particularly observed during the 1995 elections, we find that apart from 'Akif, all the other candidates have personally contributed towards their own campaigns.⁴⁰⁵ No'man Jom'a (Neo-Wafd),⁴⁰⁶ Fatheyya Al-

⁴⁰⁵ This information is based on various interviews derived during the time spent on the 1995 electoral campaigns of :Hamdi Al-Sayyed (NDP); Muhammad Al-Sayyed (NDP); 'Adel Husayn (Labour); Khaled Mohyi Al-Din (Tajammu'); Fatheyya Al-'Assal (Tajammu'); Jaber 'Abd Al- 'Aziz (Nasserite); No'man Jom'a (Neo-Wafd); and Mostafa Bakri (Liberal).

⁴⁰⁶ Personal interview with Jom'a's assistant, 19 November 1995.

'Assal (Tajammu')⁴⁰⁷ and Mostafa Bakri (Liberal)⁴⁰⁸ for example, were responsible for the financing and running of the rented premises which were temporarily used as their campaign base in Imbaba and Helwan respectively.

It should be noted however that these offices were primarily used by the contestants and their assistants to meet, discuss campaign strategies and store election advertisements. It is for this reason that when we first attempted to locate these offices, we found that the locals whom we asked for directions, were familiar with these addresses, but seemed oblivious to the purpose for which they were being used. One can argue therefore, that these contestants with rented offices were arguably as physically remote from the constituents as Jaber 'Abd Al-'Aziz (Nasserite). He not only lacked a temporary office in his competing constituency of Doqqi, but, like the three candidates mentioned above, was neither a resident of the constituency in which he was competing, nor did his party possess a local base there.

Logically, one can argue that opposition parties in particular, may, due to financial restraints, lack sufficient resources to allow them to maintain local bases in electoral constituencies where they have nominated candidates. Yet, in reality it is difficult to accurately assess whether the lack of local bases is solely the result of governmental constraints, of which finance laws plays a major part, or whether a lack of enthusiasm on the part of party leaders also contributes to this predicament. As we mentioned in the previous chapter for example, political parties are forbidden by law to accept donations from foreign individuals and organisations. The Egyptian companies or individuals that donate to political parties must bear in mind that by law, the recipient party must

⁴⁰⁷ Personal interview with 'Assal's uncle at her rented premise, 6 November 1995.

⁴⁰⁸ Personal interview with Bakri, 14 November 1995.

publish details of the transaction in its newspaper if the amount exceeds two thousand Egyptian pounds. Logically, this process can act as a deterrent to prospective donors who may not want the publicity and arguably, the aggravation entailed if the contribution is intended for an opposition party.

However, political parties have access to other sources of financing such as the one hundred thousand (Egyptian) pounds each registered party receives from the Shura (consultative) Council, party membership fees and revenues derived from the sale of newspapers and other party publication sales both in Egypt and abroad.⁴⁰⁹ Indeed, judging from the contrasting appearance of party headquarters, some parties it would seem, are more financially secure than others. The Neo-Wafd with its Headquarters, for example, in a multi-million pound villa in central Cairo, does not appear to be suffering dire financial problems. The success of its newspaper Al-Wafd, is reflected in the fact that it constitutes the sole daily opposition party newspaper in Egypt. Moreover, according to Ali Salama, the party's deputy secretary-general, the more senior a member, the more he is expected to pay in membership fees. Hence, it is not uncommon for example, for a senior member to pay between "five and ten thousand pounds" in annual membership fees.⁴¹⁰

In this context, one would assume that an opposition party in the Neo-Wafd's position would only be too willing, if the opportunity arose, to finance the establishment of a small local base outside Cairo. Apparently, this is not the

⁴⁰⁹ It has been noted for example that political parties appear to receive a decent income as a result of the regular sale to Gulf states, and Saudi Arabia in particular, of a set amount of newspapers for the price of one U.S. dollar a copy. Personal Interviews including Abd Al-Ghaffar Shokr, deputy secretary-general of the Tajammu', 17 December 1994, and Mustafa Bakri, Editor in Chief of Al-Ahrar, 20 December 1995. It is worth noting that in Egypt these papers are sold for about fifty piasters a copy. That is the equivalent of ten U.S. cents.

⁴¹⁰ Personal Interview, 8 January 1995.

case. A discussion we observed in which 'Ali Salama and several other prominent Neo-Wafd members including 'Abd Al-'Aziz Zayam and Hasan Hafez were attempting to convince a young Neo-Wafd member to personally pay the deposit required for a new party base appears indicative of this.

One example regarding parties and finances⁴¹¹

The young man in question had come from his rural hometown to the party Headquarters in Cairo, with the news that he had found a vacant office in his locality which he felt would be suitable as a local base for the party. Moreover, he appeared rather excited because the property owner was demanding about eight thousand Egyptian pounds for deposit, followed by a monthly rent of one hundred Egyptian pounds. Judging from the young man's description of the premises it seemed a very good deal. The place was apparently in a good location and was well constructed with all the necessary amenities. He also argued that apart from the deposit, its running costs would be minimal because he was planning to run it on a voluntary basis.

The aim, it would seem, was to use the office as a focal point for the recruitment of unemployed young people in the area. As these unemployed people had little else to distract them, he seemed sure his efforts would contribute towards expanding party membership at the grass roots level. Whether this would be the case or not, it would seem Salama and his colleagues were not very eager to find out. Rather, they argued that the young man should first show his commitment to be genuine by personally paying the deposit himself. If he did, then he would have proved his commitment to the project and the matter of party material such as posters and publications, monthly rent and the annual electricity, water and telephone bills would subsequently be paid by the party.

⁴¹¹ This example was derived from personal observation at 'Ali Salama's office, Neo-Wafd Headquarters, Cairo, 8 January 1995.

In view of the fact that government subsidies ensure annual electricity, water and telephone bills are very cheap, this proposal seemed rather unfair. This was not, after all, a private enterprise proposal and it should be noted that the young man was volunteering his services for no monetary reward. Over an hour of debate and discussion in which the young man stressed several times that he could not personally afford to pay the deposit, those present eventually came to the consensus that if he were to come back with half of the required deposit, then the matter would be seriously referred to the Party Chairman. In the final analysis, what this meant was that the young party member left Cairo with less hope than when he had arrived.

One can argue that the tactics of the Neo-Wafd may not necessarily be representative of other opposition parties. The majority of opposition parties may after all, be genuinely unable to finance the maintenance of permanent or even temporary local bases. It could be for this reason therefore, that their candidates are compelled to rent their own temporary premises in their respective electoral constituencies. Yet on the other hand, if this is the case, one would presume that the parties officially represented in the electoral arena would attempt to compensate the lack of financial assistance extended to its candidates with manpower assistance. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood not only provides volunteer members to assist its own candidates, but also assists candidates representing its political ally, the Labour Party. Yet it would seem that such form of assistance appears to elude not only Neo-Wafd candidates, but also candidates representing the other opposition parties.

The issue of party manpower assistance

Indicative of the above assumption is the apparent dependence of candidates on hired help during their electoral campaigns. As a senior member of the Neo-Wafd, one might logically assume that No'man Jom'a for example, would be surrounded by junior party members eager to assist

one of the party's most senior leaders. Instead, what we found were privately hired assistants unconnected to the party he was officially representing. Some of these assistants were participating as a favour to Jom'a, not because of party connections, but because they were junior employees from his own law firm. The majority however, were local Imbaba youth. Again, none were Neo-Wafd members. Instead, all of them were apparently hired specifically for the electoral campaign period.

According to one of the law firm 'volunteers', at least ten of these privately hired assistants were being paid the enormous sum of five hundred (Egyptian) pounds a week to help promote Jom'a's campaign in Imbaba. In view of these wages and the fact that Jom'a's daily expenditure on the campaign averaged £L.E.2,500, one would assume a candidate in this position would only be too happy to forsake most of his private helpers in order to cut the cost of his campaign. This however would have been virtually impossible because the Neo-Wafd's contribution to his campaign was no more than that extended to other party candidates. Namely a few party posters and other inexpensive party propaganda material.⁴¹²

The 1995 election campaign of Mostafa Bakri, editor-in-chief of Al-Ahrar's mouthpiece of the same name, provides another example of this predicament. In a similar situation to Jom'a, Bakri had secured the assistance of some junior journalists from the newspaper which he edited. As hired professionals at the newspaper, these young journalists were not participating in Bakri's campaign as fellow party members, but as a favour to their boss. In addition to these 'volunteers', Bakri also depended upon the help of his brothers, who incidentally, were Neo-Wafd members. In the final analysis, the bulk of Bakri's campaign help came from privately hired Helwan locals. Whilst Bakri refused to

⁴¹² The above figures were obtained from Abir, a young lawyer at his law firm, and also one of Jom'a's 'volunteer' campaign assistants. Personal Interview, 19 November 1995.

disclose the amount spent on hired help, or indeed his campaign cost in general, it is sufficient to note that he acknowledged it was not an insignificant amount.⁴¹³

On the surface therefore, it would seem that of those representing the legalised political parties, it is the NDP candidates who are in the most advantageous position in terms of party support. After all, the NDP organises for its candidates formal electoral gatherings which opposition candidates cannot compete. Yet, as we discussed earlier, formal electoral gatherings, whether held on a grand scale for NDP candidates, or on a more moderate scale, as appears to be the case for opposition candidates, are not necessarily efficient mechanisms of voter recruitment. In addition, one should bear in mind that except in cases where a candidate is also a Minister and thus has direct access to the resources of his Ministry, the NDP does not support more than a few of such gatherings for each of its officially nominated candidates.⁴¹⁴

What this means is that in between such gatherings NDP candidates are left to organise and finance their own electoral campaigns. The financial and organisational burdens of maintaining their own campaigns is reflected for example in Hamdi Al-Sayyed's comment that:

⁴¹³ In fact, because Bakri was personally responsible for his entire campaign, including the payments for hired help, the costs incurred had been so high that he was compelled to seek financial assistance from a "friend in Alexandria" who also happened to be a "rich businessman". Personal Interview with Bakri, 20 December 1995.

⁴¹⁴ If we return to our discussion with the 'rented' audience that comprised Helwan workers for example, (at Helwan Youth Club gathering, 25 November 1995) we find that during the official one month designated for electoral campaigns, it was stated that they were required only two or three times a week. Moreover, the fact that the bus driver had to inform them in advance where they were going and who they should be cheering, means that such formal NDP gatherings were predominantly for a different candidate/s each time. Also, it is worth noting that NDP candidates, Muhammad Al-Sayyed and Hamdi Al-Sayyed mentioned that they did not participate in more than a few such gatherings. Personal Interview, M. Al-Sayyed, 26 November 1995 and; H. Al-Sayyed, 27 December 1994.

"Election campaigns vary in cost from one candidate to another. Sometimes you get various contributions from certain members of the constituency [note: no mention of contribution from party]. Personally, my costs are low because of my reputation, my previous history with the constituents and the good work I have been doing on their behalf since 1979. Therefore I usually spend in the region of twenty thousand pounds. This is spent on posters, some publications and the cost of arranging meetings. Usually constituents would provide their vehicles to transport people to the meetings, but of-course it would not be fair if they also paid for the fuel."⁴¹⁵

To judge from the above comment, it would seem that al-Sayyed is suggesting that less established or unpopular colleagues are faced with personal costs exceeding those he incurs. This assumption appears to be verified by Muhammad Al-Sayyed, who also maintained that his campaign costs have been "very low" due to the locals who "all help" him out. The costs concurred by less fortunate colleagues however, can, as he points out, reach into "hundreds of thousands."⁴¹⁶ It would therefore seem that during electoral campaigning, the predicament faced by NDP candidates is not too dissimilar from that faced by their (legalised) opposition counter-parts. Both sides appear more dependant upon their personal resources, networks and the goodwill of their constituents than on their respective parties.

On another level, one can argue that NDP candidates at least have one particular advantage not readily available to opposition candidates: namely if a candidate required a formal base in a particular constituency, it would not be a problem for the party to secure one from the various state-owned properties. In the case of Hamdi Al-Sayyed for example, the NDP provided him with access to a state-owned office, located behind a mosque in Heliopolis. Therefore, since becoming a member of the People's Assembly in 1979,

⁴¹⁵ Personal Interview, 1 January 1995.

⁴¹⁶ Personal Interview, 26 November 1995.

Al-Sayyed has been able to maintain a permanent base where his constituents could locate him, and where he could personally meet them on a regular basis.

Yet it is worth noting that the office is used for such purposes predominantly as a result of Al-Sayyed's personal efforts than due to those of the NDP. In other words, whilst the office is actually provided by the NDP, the office itself is run by Al-Sayyed with the help of two privately hired assistants, not NDP personnel. Consequently, if it were not for the personal efforts of Al-Sayyed and his privately hired assistants, the office would be little more than empty state-owned property. Al-Sayyed's personal efforts, it should also be noted, extend to the fact that, as the long running Head of the Egyptian Medical Syndicate, he is able to give locals the assurance that in cases of absolute emergency, he is also reachable at the Syndicate Headquarters.⁴¹⁷

Since entering the People's Assembly in 1990, Muḥammad Al-Sayyed, has also held a regular office in the local state-owned *Jam'eyya*. Yet, it should be noted that al-Sayyed originates and resides in the working class area of Hada'iq al-Qobba. Therefore, had he been denied access to an official office in the constituency, it would still not be too difficult for locals and potential supporters to locate either himself or a member of his family. Moreover, like Hamdi Al-Sayyed, Muḥammad Al-Sayyed has also been personally responsible for running the state-owned office. This is primarily reflected in the fact his office assistants comprise a nephew and a couple of other local

⁴¹⁷ According to Hamdi Al-Sayyed, his two assistants see the constituents four times a week. One of these times he is also present at the office. However, it is not only the office which he depends upon to meet constituents. In his words, he also does: "regular site visits to see their problems first hand." Personal Interview, 1 January 1995.

young men, none of whom are NDP members and all of whom are on Al-Sayyed's private payroll.⁴¹⁸

One can argue therefore, that once in office, NDP candidates may be in a more advantageous position than their opposition counter-parts in terms of directing state resources into their respective constituencies. But during electoral competition, it would seem that NDP candidates and legalised opposition candidates face a similar predicament. Namely, insufficient financial and, more importantly, organisational support, from their parties. This point, it would seem, is of particular significance if one is to appreciate why electoral candidates representing the legally participating parties appear more compelled, in comparison for example, to the Muslim Brotherhood, to adopt individualistic campaign strategies that are predominantly independent of their parties. These strategies, in turn, appear to further reinforce the role of non-competitive multi-party elections as an instrument of co-option and clientelist control.

4.4 Individualistic Campaign Strategies

As we have already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the two most important aspects of individualistic campaign strategies in relation to this study are: firstly, the way in which the dynamics involved seem to do little to encourage the recruitment of party supporters at the grass roots level, and as a consequence, this form of political participation thus appears to, secondly, reinforce the role of elected politicians as intermediaries between the centre and those on the periphery.

The electoral campaign of first time candidate Muhammad Mesiri (NDP: constituency of Kafr Ghanem) in 1990, illustrates the main features of the predominantly

⁴¹⁸ Personal Interview with Al-Sayyed, and also Salah (nephew/assistant), both interviews on 26 November 1995.

personalistic strategies pursued by party candidates in attempts to secure voter support.

Campaign strategies of first-time party candidate⁴¹⁹

Muhammad Mesiri, it should be noted, is a multi-millionaire, agricultural/industrial businessman located in Tmay, the main town of the predominantly rural constituency of Kafr Ghanem. Mesiri's wealth and status within the community could not have passed unnoticed by the local residents, not simply because they considered him one of the wealthiest men in the area, but also because he was judged to be one of the largest private employers in the community. Mesiri it would seem, caught the attention of the authorities in the late eighties, when, having personally financed the construction and equipping of a multi-million pound technical college in Tmay, he subsequently donated it as a gift to the state. The publicity surrounding this grand gesture was further accentuated by the fact that President Mubarak had decided to officially open it himself.

Interestingly, Mesiri's rise in the eyes of the authorities, appears to have coincided with the declining status of the constituency's incumbent (NDP *fe'at*) deputy.⁴²⁰ It would seem that as a result, the incumbent

⁴¹⁹ Information for the above example was derived from the locals of the village 'Mit Nas' during our 1995-6 research period in Egypt. It should be noted that 'Mit Nas' is a pseudonym intended to protect the privacy of the village inhabitants. The real name of the village can be obtained at the discretion of the author.

⁴²⁰ The then incumbent deputy had become increasingly unpopular in Kafr Ghanem allegedly as a result of his inaccessibility to the locals, the long periods spent in Cairo and his inability to divert sufficient state resources into the constituency. In fact, he had lost so much support within the constituency that ballot fraud was necessary during the 1987 elections in order to prevent his Muslim Brotherhood rival (then registered under the Labour Party banner) from winning the seat. The headmaster of one of the two primary schools in Mit Nas was actually involved in that episode. According to him, he was summoned, in his capacity as a state employee, to participate in the formal ballot count traditionally held in the constituency's main town of Tmay. During the ballot-count, a fight instigated by one of the NDP's formal observer's ensued with his Labour Party counter-part. This, it was alleged, was an intentional strategy aimed at creating a chaotic

Deputy was dropped from the NDP nomination list for the 1990 legislative elections and subsequently replaced by Mesiri. Judging from our previous discussion of the NDP, one can argue that this is not an uncommon party tactic. The focus here however, is on the main factors on which Mesiri based his first electoral campaign.

On the communal level, Mesiri already laid claim to influence and networks that largely rested upon his position as one of constituency's largest employers. Yet, one can argue that the construction of a technical college undoubtedly raised his position and esteem in the community. Especially if one takes into account that without this college, parents had previously been faced with the equally hard choice of denying their off-spring the opportunity of further education or of sending them to either one of the Governorate's two large urban centres, Senbellawayn or Mangura. This in turn, would have meant

scene in order to ensure the security personnel expel all observers from the hall for unruly behaviour. Once the observers were out of the hall, the ballot counting supervisor, along with some security personnel told the ballot counters, that as "good citizens and nationalists working for the good of the state" they must fill in all the unused votes in favour of the "President's Party". As voter turn-out was not particularly high, this meant filling-out a lot of ballot papers. According to the headmaster, as state employees, none of them were in a position to argue with the authorities. Half way through the night however, as they were busy filling out the empty ballots, one of the opposition observers found his way back in. Unfortunately for the headmaster, his table was directly next to the entrance, thus immediately catching the observer's attention. On seeing what was happening the observer started screaming "help, they're cheating!" As the other observers found their way to the hall, the security personnel had no choice but to take everyone on the premise to the police station. After a few hours, everyone was discharged and thus returned to finish what they started. The observer, it emerged, could only prove that the headmaster's table was cheating, therefore only the ballots from that table were counted as spoiled. Since everyone in the hall had participated in that fraud, the spoiled votes did not prevent the NDP candidate from gaining more votes than the more popular Muslim Brotherhood candidate. Personal Interview, 30 November 1995. It seems that this case was widely publicised at the time, because by coincidence, it was also mentioned earlier by former Tajammu' MP (1976-79), 'Abu Al-'Iz Hariri, during personal interview, 28 December 1994. Hariri, it should be noted, mentioned the case to illustrate how "respectable citizens" such as teachers are pressured by the government into unethical electoral activities. He is not however, personally familiar with the headmaster or anyone else in that constituency.

these predominantly poor parents being burdened with the cost of private lodging and living expense for their offspring. A technical college in Tmay however, meant that local students from Tmay and the surrounding villages could attend their studies and return home at the end of each day.

Whilst the above gesture on the part of Mesiri can be viewed as overtly generous in nature, it should, however, be noted that Kafr Ghanem is a large and densely populated constituency with 174,000 registered voters.⁴²¹ What this means is that if, for example, one takes into account those individuals whose votes Mesiri may easily secure out of gratitude or loyalty- individuals such as employees, beneficiaries of his social donations, family, friends and associates- one can argue that this would not necessarily be sufficient to ensure majority votes in such a large area. However, this is not to imply a major contribution to the community such as the technical college would not be beneficial in his campaign efforts. Rather, its benefit, one can argue, is more symbolic in nature. That is, it indicates that he cares for the community and that on this basis, if he were to reach public office, he would be likely to ensure sufficient state resources were channelled into the constituency. This in turn, suggests that the candidate had, through his famous donation, secured overall recognition and goodwill from the constituents.

To ensure faithful turn-out on election day however, Mesiri, it would seem, was required to supplement this communal gesture with the construction and expansion of personal networks of electoral alliances. What this meant was travelling around the constituency visiting the lomas

⁴²¹ This statistic was provided by a government appointed supervisor at the voting station located in Mit Nas. It was also confirmed by the village headmaster mentioned previously. 29 November 1995. If, for example, we compare the 80,000 or so registered voters in the densely populated urban constituency of Hada'iq al-Qobba, to the 174,000 in Kafr Ghanem, one can better appreciate the scale of the latter constituency.

(headmen) and the other local notables of Tmay and the surrounding villages. Behind the courteous talk, the purpose was to discuss whether these notables could use their local influence and networks to ensure sufficient voter support on election day. In other words, this process involved the recruiting of personal allies who in turn, would be in a position to bring with them into this alliance as many voters as they could.

It would also seem that it is not uncommon for such campaign tactics to involve a financial transaction. The 'omda of our 'research village' for example was given by Mesiri, an undisclosed 'donation' which he maintained that he used to pay for a communal supper in the village mdyafa (guest house).⁴²² Events such as a communal supper, it should be noted, are not festive affairs. Rather, they are subdued events to which the heads of extended households in the village would be invited.⁴²³ The purpose is primarily to discuss, in a relaxed atmosphere, the elections, the absent host, and what the plan would be for election day. In this particular case, the situation was overtly complicated because two of the villagers had decided to compete, as independents in the fe'at and 'amel/fellah categories respectively. What this meant was that the 'omda and most family heads, were engrossed in discussions on how to convince both, or at least the local fe'at candidate, to drop out of the electoral race. This process involved several other informal sittings, most of which were held in the 'omda's home.⁴²⁴

⁴²² The 'omda maintained that he could not remember how much Mesiri donated at that time, but he did remember that it was over two thousand (Egyptian) pounds. Personal Interview, 3 December 1995.

⁴²³ The invitation of family elders appears to be based on the logic that their senior status within their respective families renders them in the position to ensure whatever conclusion arises in such informal gatherings would subsequently be implemented by the registered voters in their family on election day.

⁴²⁴ On the basis of the one man two-votes procedure discussed previously, the logic here was that if the fe'at candidate dropped out, the villagers could give that vote to Mesiri provided he entered a vote-exchange pact with the local candidate in the alternate category. This way, the remaining local candidate would

One may argue that the effort entailed in attempting to convince one or both of the local candidates to relinquish their place in order to assist Mesiri's campaign would not have taken place if Mesiri was not such a prominent figure and had not made a substantial 'donation' to the *'omda*. Yet, one can also view this predicament from another perspective. Namely that neither of the local candidates were of particular prominence or wealth. Rather, one candidate was a humble village school teacher and the other a minor seed merchant. What this meant was that outside the village, they were unheard of. As we pointed out previously, being in such a position does little to encourage voter support. Moreover, in the absence of sufficient financial resources it would be difficult for those candidates to pursue strategies that potentially expand personal networks of support, but which involve the numerous transactions which accompany extensive travelling across the constituency.

The *'omda* therefore, felt, along with most family heads in the village, that if the local candidates dropped out, or at least the *fe'at* candidate were to drop out, this would provide the villagers with the opportunity to support an almost certain winner in the form of Mesiri. This act would provide the villagers with the opportunity to claim additional benefits once the candidate reached office and would thus have access to state resources. However, it would also save the local candidates, whom the villagers did not expect to win, a lot of wasted time, effort, and more importantly, financial resources, which realistically, they could not afford to squander.

increase the number of votes obtained on election day, and at the same time, the village would have also been able to show their support to Mesiri. As the local *fe'at* candidate did not see why he should be the one to drop out, the village elders felt it was perhaps better if both dropped out. That way, neither of the candidates would loose face, and at the same time, the village votes could be freely used as a bargaining tool with Mesiri and other lesser candidates within the constituency.

Unfortunately for Mesiri and arguably the village, neither of the local candidates agreed to drop~~out~~, and as communal ties meant that the villagers were compelled- albeit reluctantly in this case- to support their own 'awlād al-balād (sons of the village), Mesiri was unable to secure any of the 6,800 votes from that village in the 1990 elections.⁴²⁵ Misiri, did however win the elections in 1990. This, one can argue, was simplified by the fact that he did not face a predicament of this nature in the majority of other localities in the constituency. The point here however, is that the overall structure of Mesiri's campaign illustrates how, as a party candidate, his party did not appear to play a significant role in the recruitment of electoral supporters. Instead, it seems that it was the clientelist ties which he was able to build and expand as a result of his prominent position in the constituency, which in the final analysis, helped ensure first time entry to the People's Assembly in 1990.

More examples of campaign strategies
of first-time party candidates

Clientelist methods of voter recruitment are not a strategy confined solely to NDP candidates. Rather, it appears to be a mechanism that can also be detected in the electoral campaigns of legalised opposition candidates attempting first time entry to the Assembly. The Neo-Wafd's No'man Jom'a for example, was observed discussing with the Shaykh

⁴²⁵ The communal ties which lead rural villages, and to a lesser degree, close-knit urban areas inhabited by poorer sections of society, to give priority to a local 'son', appear to be based not only on the grounds of sentimentality and primitive loyalty. They are also based on the clientelist logic that if, by some chance, the candidate won, then he would be likely to give priority to helping his 'own' area and people before the rest of the constituency. If, upon gaining office, he does not match such expectations, then, as one villager put it: "no-one will support him again". Personal Interview, 3 December 1995. Returning to Mesiri however, that the effort and personal expense he concurred in that particular village did not produce the desired results on election day, does not, as we will discuss later, necessarily imply such efforts were completely futile.

*al-Balad*⁴²⁶ of Kom Bara, a rural area on the outskirts of Imbaba, the plan for Jom'a's second visit to the locals. During the discussion, the *Shaykh* mentioned that the one and a half thousand voters in his area had not only agreed to support Jom'a, but as a *show* of such support, many jeered Jom'a's rival when, a few days earlier, he attempted to visit the area.⁴²⁷ The six thousand pounds which Jom'a 'donated' to the area through it's *Shaykh* undoubtedly contributed towards ensuring such enthusiastic electoral support.⁴²⁸

It should also be noted that during the 1995 campaign period, Jom'a was in the process of establishing a branch of his law firm in Imbaba. The reason, according to one of his campaign assistants, was so to provide work for some of the unemployed young law graduates in the constituency. If this adventure proved successful, then it was expected that further branches would be established around the constituency at later dates.⁴²⁹

Whilst there is no evidence to suggest Jom'a's concern for youth unemployment in Imbaba is not genuine, the fact that his decision to help tackle this problem coincided with his election campaign, indicates additional motives. Jom'a, after all, is not a resident of Imbaba, nor does he have family ties within the constituency. In other words, he is

⁴²⁶ *Shaykh al-Balad* is the name given to a local leader who is of lesser status than an *omda*. In large rural villages such as Mit Nas, several of these individuals are elected (and thus registered in the Ministry of Interior) throughout the village. Their role is to assist with problems in their immediate neighbourhoods, but at the end of the day they are responsible to the *omda*. On the outskirts of urban areas such as Imbaba, the situation is slightly different because the community might be rather small thus not requiring an *omda*. In this situation, usually one *Shaykh al-Balad* is sufficient to head the community.

⁴²⁷ Personal Observation, 20 November 1995.

⁴²⁸ Also, according to several of Jom'a's campaign assistants, the candidate had, up to time of interview, contributed from his own money, no less than £L.E.20,000 in "assistance" to various other communities in Imbaba. Personal Interviews, 20 November 1995.

⁴²⁹ Personal Interview, 19 November 1995.

an outsider. It would seem therefore, that by establishing a business in the constituency, he was aiming to establish his prominence in the community, rather like Mesiri - albeit on a lesser scale. The logic arguably being that with his own law firm in the constituency - which as a very wealthy and highly successful law professor, he aimed to subsidise through existing academic/business ventures- he would be in the position to build and expand his clientelist ties in the community, not only as an employer, but also as someone in the position of providing legal advice and assistance to needy constituents.

As a professional journalist, the decision of the Liberal party's Mostafa Bakri to personally establish the weekly newspaper, "Sawt Helwan" (Voice of Helwan), also points to a similar tactic. The newspaper, according to Bakri, was established with financial assistance from personal friends and associates, six months prior to him entering the 1995 elections. The main purpose being that he wanted to provide a service to the constituents, and thus felt that a newspaper which would focus primarily upon parochial and national issues which are of particular concern to the Helwan community would be of benefit.⁴³⁰

Indeed, it would seem that Bakri appears to be a more strategic planner than Jom'a, since he did not wait until the elections before embarking upon his venture. Yet the intended outcome of this tactic appears to lead to the same argument. Namely that Bakri, who, like Jom'a, was also a stranger to the constituency in which he was competing, was, through the establishment of this local newspaper, attempting to establish a prominent name for himself on which he could build and expand his base of support in the area. The logic in this case being that as Editor-in-Chief of this newspaper, he would not only build clientelist ties within the community through his employment of numerous local staff. More importantly, these clientelist ties would

⁴³⁰ Personal Interview, 14 November 1995.

expand as aggrieved constituents approached him with social, economic and political concerns they want publicly aired. In this context, one can argue that his eventual aim was to secure sufficient electoral support from grateful constituents.

To a large degree, Bakri's strategy appears to have been successful. His local newspaper, he maintained at the time of interview, reached a circulation of approximately twenty thousand a week⁴³¹ and on that basis, one assumes he had thus become a familiar name within Helwan. Realistically however, neither Bakri nor Jom'a could have managed to cultivate sufficient clientelist support through their respective ventures unless constituents had been given sufficient time, in terms of years rather than months, to come to terms with, and more importantly, to genuinely benefit from the 'services' provided by these candidates.

Yet again, what the above examples are intended to illustrate, is that when it comes to mechanisms of voter recruitment, opposition candidates, like their NDP counterparts, are predominantly left to their own devices. The primary consequence being that rather than focus upon recruiting party supporters, candidates are left with little option but to utilise their personal resources to build their own personal following. A strategy which in turn, focuses predominantly upon the creation and expansion of clientelist ties between candidates and voters- dynamics which further encourage the prevalence of political individualism in a multi-party arena.

Seeking re-election and some consequences

In terms of candidates seeking re-election, it would seem that they too face a predicament not too dissimilar to that discussed above. Whilst these candidates may not be required to focus much attention upon the establishment of a clientelist base of support, it would appear that

⁴³¹ Personal Interview, 14 November 1995.

sufficient voter support on election day means renewing and attempting to expand existing clientelist ties. This, it would seem, is not a simple task in view of the numerous participating candidates, some of whom may possess sufficient prominence and resources to constitute a serious challenge to those seeking re-election.

One can argue that it is a potential challenge of this nature which constitutes the most important factor in understanding a candidate's clientelist dependence upon government and hence the role he comes to perform as a consequence. To paraphrase, a new candidate competing in elections appears to utilise personal resources in an effort to establish as large a base of voter support as circumstances will allow. Mesiri, Jom'a and Bakri for example, adopted different methods of voter recruitment all of which however, were based on the same clientelist logic. Yet, having spent a significant part of one's personal resources in efforts to reach political office, and then reaching office, one can argue that it would be economically illogical if not impossible to repeat this process if the individual concerned decides to seek re-election a few years later. On the other hand, whilst the candidate seeking re-election may have depleted much of his personal resources during his initial stand for office, his new rivals, especially if they are first-time competitors, are less likely to be in this position.

Perhaps more importantly however, is the fact that having reached public office, it would seem that the expectations of voters appear to increase considerably. Thus, whereas previously a candidate may have secured electoral support on the basis of his overall recognition in a community and, on occasion, the offering some modest donations during his campaign, once in office such electoral support appears to change and become increasingly conditional upon the downward flow of state resources.

In such a context, one can argue that once in office, and bearing in mind a desire to seek re-election, an incumbent's most logical option would be to focus upon the channelling of state resources into his constituency in order to preserve and perhaps even expand his existing clientelist base of support. This process in turn means clientelist dependence upon the centre and hence in the process, being compelled to conform to the designated role of being an intermediary between central government and those on the periphery. To illustrate this argument, we will return to Mesiri and, as our first example, examine part of his 1995 re-election campaign.

Renewing and expanding existing
base of voter support⁴³²

During his initial participation in elections, we discussed how Mesiri, depended upon the creation and expansion of a clientelist base of support. This was achieved through three main avenues: (i) traditional avenues (i.e. personal/business /employment ties); (ii) charitable contributions directed at the entire community (i.e. the technical college) and; (iii) financial contributions directed at specific individuals and communities (i.e. money directed at Mit Nas through the omda).

The first avenue, whereby clientelist ties are formed as a direct result of Mesiri's position as a major businessman and employer in the community, one can argue, is an on-going process which does not necessarily require renewal upon his return to the arena of political contest. Also, because the technical college constitutes a grand contribution to the community as a whole, it is unlikely that Mesiri would be personally expected to repeat a gesture of this magnitude. This leads us to the third avenue stated above. Whilst Mesiri may have established a clientelist base of support as a result of the first two

⁴³² Information regarding the above case, was again, derived during our 1995 stay at Mit Nas.

factors, the candidate, during his initial campaign, was also compelled to strengthen and expand this support base by travelling around the constituency, meeting specific community heads and generally bestowing some financial contributions.

The importance of this later avenue, it would seem, is not simply the fact it contributes towards strengthening and expanding Mesiri's base of support, but that the clientelist ties on which it is based, appear to require renewal and reaffirmation during the electoral period. If, for example, we return to Mesiri's encounter with Mit Nas during the 1990 elections, Mesiri gave the 'omda several thousand pounds as a 'donation' to the village. In reality, this money was given in return for electoral support from the village. Whilst the money changed hands, and the 'omda and other senior villagers appear to have genuinely wanted to support Mesiri, the fact remained that they did not.

In view of the above outcome, one might be led to assume that the 'omda, having accepted money on behalf of the village and subsequently unable to keep his part of the deal, would attempt, at the next electoral opportunity, to make amends. This, however, does not appear to have been the case. Instead, when Mesiri returned to the village during his re-election campaign in 1995, new demands were presented by the villagers in return for electoral support.

At that time, the village did not have a local *fe'at* candidate running for office. However, the same seed merchant who competed (and lost) in the *fellah/'amel* category during the 1990 elections, had decided to compete yet again, as an independent in the 1995 elections.⁴³³ The villagers therefore, did not simply expect from Mesiri tangible rewards in return for electoral support, but also

⁴³³ His view was that he had a good chance of winning in 1995 because he felt he had built upon and expanded the networks he constructed during the 1990 elections. Personal Interview, 28 November 1995.

expected him to enter a vote-exchange deal with their local candidate. In other words, in order for the villagers to give their 6,800 *fe'at* votes to *Mesiri*, they wanted as part of the deal, for their local candidate to receive, in return, the equivalent amount of votes, but in the *fellah/_amel* category. Such votes were logically expected to come from *Mesiri*'s own home town of Tmay, where, in his capacity as *ibn al-balad*, his most loyal supporters can be found. Supporters, who, most importantly, would be willing to give not only their *fe'at* vote to their candidate, but also to 'donate' their *fellah/_amel* vote to the candidate of his choice- so as to better their candidate's electoral position.

In addition to the above vote-exchange pact, the tangible benefit agreed upon in this particular case was the paving of one of the main roads leading into the village. Moreover, it was agreed with the candidate that work on this road would proceed and finish before election day. The following quotation provides some explanation as to the logic behind such demands:

"I do not think that we are asking too much from *Mesiri*. *Al-ta'awun* (vote-exchange deal) with our candidate is not too much to ask. Tmay is a large place and he has a lot of support there, so giving our candidate some of the *fellah* votes which he controls is not a problem for him. Anyway if we did not ask for them, some other candidate would have taken them instead. In fact *Mesiri* has made vote-exchange pacts with almost every competing *fellah* and *_amel* in the constituency...of course it is all based on how many votes they can offer him, not the other way around...with his supporters he can meet everyone's demands. We did ask for the road to be paved before election day because we wanted to make sure his part of the agreement was kept. I'm sure he would not intentionally ignore his side of the deal, but he is a very busy man looking after the interests of a large constituency. If it is not done now, then who's going to

travel to Tmay and Cairo everyday looking for him and reminding him."⁴³⁴

With regard to the query as to whether paving the road was an excessive demand in view of Mesiri's 1990 'contribution' to the village and the fact he received no electoral support in return, the same respondent argued:

"Mesiri knew two locals had nominated themselves for election. He did not expect us to leave our own and support him. He came to us then in case there was any chance they might drop out. We kept our part of the deal... we did everything to convince our candidates to drop out, but they were both stubborn as mules. Even [the seed merchant's] wife left him because she was angry that he was squandering their life savings. Actually she's left him again because of his participation this time around... In the last elections we did not promise something and then not keep to it. But now we are promising something and paving a road in return is not a big thing to ask from someone in his position... He must have a lot of important connections in government now, so really, he is not expected to give from his own pocket. But he is expected to offer more than the other contestants."⁴³⁵

The villagers' demands from Mesiri, and the logic on which they appear to have been based, thus illustrates how returning to the electoral arena is not a simple process. Rather, seeking re-election appears to pressure an outgoing deputy to continue the pattern of clientelist recruitment if he is to expect re-election. Indeed, he might not depend upon his personal resources whilst seeking re-election, but to reaffirm his clientelist base of support, the exchange of tangible benefits in the form of state resources, emerges to play an important part in this process. The following words reflect the increasing pressure placed on candidates seeking re-election:

⁴³⁴ Personal Interview, local headmaster of village primary school, 29 November 1995.

⁴³⁵ Ibid..

"Before Mesiri we had a useless representative. No-one supported him because he could not provide anything from the government... if he could not manage that then there were plenty of other candidates who could take his place... In 1987, the government had to cheat to keep him in office, but they too got fed up and decided to put Mesiri in his place."⁴³⁶

Even candidates themselves openly admit the predicament they face during elections:

"I have competed in legislative elections eight times... The voters have specific expectations... 'I'll get you the water, the school, the electricity' this is all I say in my election campaign. Nobody cares what my political orientation is. Nobody bothers to ask me."⁴³⁷

Placed in such a predicament whereby party nomination is dependent upon the size of one's assumed or established base of support, and subsequently being compelled to depend upon state resources in order to preserve that base of support- and thus one's place in the Assembly, the party and also the community- is instrumental, not only in understanding how the electoral arena appears to shape the role of NDP deputies as intermediaries between the centre and those periphery. It also shows how shapes the role of opposition deputies.

In the case of opposition candidates seeking re-election the situation, one can argue, appears to be more or less the same. That is, the individualistic approach to political participation is not only reinforced as clientelist ties become renewed and reaffirmed, but also such ties appear increasingly conditional upon state controlled resources. The base of support on which Khaled Mohyi al-Din, leader of the Tajammu', appears to have

⁴³⁶ Personal Interview, Haj Muhammad, prominent village landowner, 4 December 1995.

⁴³⁷ Hamdi Al-Sayyed, speaking during conference on elections at Cairo's Research Centre for Human Rights, 25 December 1995.

depended for re-election in 1995 seems reflective of this predicament.

Renewing and expanding existing
base of voter support (2)⁴³⁸

Mohyi Al-Din's role as one of the Free Officers responsible for the 1952 'revolution', and his subsequent membership of the Revolutionary Command Council means that in contemporary Egypt, he is not simply regarded as an opposition leader, but also as a national figure. Seeking election in his rural home constituency of Kafr Shokr, therefore, one can argue that as its most famous 'ibn al-balad', it did not require much effort on his part to gain overall recognition from the inhabitants. The point here, however, is that when it comes to seeking re-election, the process of renewing and reaffirming electoral support, and the clientelist conditions on which such support is based, does not appear to differ extensively, from what we have discussed above.

The day we joined Mohyi Al-Din on his campaign trail, he was due to visit the two villages of Kafr 'Abu Zahra and Kafr Shaykh Ibrahim. On arrival at each village, Mohyi Al-Din and his aide were greeted by the village 'omda, who guided him first to his home, and later, to the homes of the most prominent local families. Homes such as that belonging to Haj Husayn Mahmud Husayn, a 107 year old man, who, as head of eight generations that comprise 182 individuals, remains one of the most influential people in Kafr 'Abu Zahra. On the surface, such visits might not appear overtly political. Mohyi Al-Din for example, spent no more than twenty minutes in each of the fifteen households he visited on that particular day. Moreover, conversation with the hosts extended to little more than

⁴³⁸ Information for the above example includes that obtained from personal interviews and non-participant observation during visit to Mohyi Al-Din at his rural constituency of Kafr Shokr, 12 November 1995.

social niceties. Elections and politics, in other words, were not topics of conversation.

It should be noted however, that Mohyi Al-Din spent a large part of his re-election campaign travelling around the constituency on such visits. Hence, this was his second trip to these families. Moreover, he hoped to visit them once more before election day.⁴³⁹ What this implies therefore, is that conversation relating to his re-election, and the conditions of their support, is likely to have been discussed on a previous, more private occasion. If arrangements relating to these issues had not already been agreed upon, it is unlikely the candidate would have made arrangements for three visits during the relatively short one month period designated for campaigning. This in turn, means that Mohyi Al-Din's presence was arguably, a reaffirmation of existing clientelist ties.

Whilst the host families did not personally participate in political conversation with the candidate during that particular visit, it is worth noting that many other villagers did however take this opportunity to present Mohyi Al-Din with written petitions relating, amongst other things, to employment, water and road work problems.⁴⁴⁰ As the nature of such petitions indicate, regardless of Mohyi Al-Din's position as a respected national figure, or the fact that he heads an opposition party, his election to the People's Assembly appears nevertheless, to be viewed predominantly as a link to central government and hence, the provision of state controlled resources. A member of one of the host families in Kafr Shaykh Ibrahim explains how he believes Mohyi Al-Din is perceived in this rural community. In his words:

"Khaled Mohyi Al-Din is our hero. He is Egypt's hero and we are all very proud of the things he did with Nasser for the

⁴³⁹ Personal Interview with Mohyi Al-Din, 12 November 1995.

⁴⁴⁰ Personal Conversation with some of the petitioners, 12 November 1995.

country... People vote for him because they are proud of him. But also because he does a lot to help ... until recently, the children used to go to a secondary school outside the village but he got the government to build one here. It's things like that which are important here."⁴⁴¹

Again, the above comment appears to suggest that whilst Mohyi Al-Din is held in exceptionally high esteem, it is also the state resources he channels into the community which ensures his re-election efforts receive sufficient voter support. In terms of party politics, the situation appears more or less the same. It is the candidate's demonstrated skills at diverting state resources to the community, not his party stand, which constitutes a decisive factor in his re-election prospects:

"The peasant will always give his support to the person or candidate that will look after his problems. It is not really important what party that person represents... [Mohyi Al-Din] does not talk to us about his party and nobody is bothered about that. He can do what he wants with it. As long as he continues to help solve the people's problems, people will elect him. If he stops, then there will be no votes."⁴⁴²

Moreover, that the above logic appears equally clear to participating candidates, is reflected in the views of Al-Badri Farghali, currently a second term deputy of the Assembly and long term member of the Tajammu':

"My party connection is of no help at all. Actually my party is not popular in Port Said [where his constituency of Hayy al-'Arab is located]... I am proud of being of a member of the Tajammu' and everyone knows I am a member of that party. But in reality, they vote for me because I am able

⁴⁴¹ Personal Interview with a member of the Salim family, (of which the late 'omda of Kafr Shaykh Ibrahim belonged), 12 November 1995.

⁴⁴² Personal Interview with member of the Khatib family (of which Kafr 'Abu Zahra's shaykh al-balad is head), 12 November 1995.

to help them with their everyday living problems."⁴⁴³

To acknowledge this predicament and to seek re-election on this basis, is, in the final analysis, an indication of the extent to which electoral contest in Egypt's multi-party arena has influenced politicians representing disparate political views into performing the role of intermediaries between central government and those on the periphery. A role which in turn, contributes towards inhibiting the expansion and perhaps more importantly, the strengthening, of political parties as group entities. Whilst at the same time, it reinforces the clientelist chain of dependence leading to government.

4.5 Conclusion

The government's ability to utilise non-competitive multi-party elections as a mechanism of clientelist co-option and control, as we have argued throughout the thesis, is made easier largely as a result of governmental power to impose various constraints on virtually every level of political participation. Constraints which in turn, are intended to pressure political actors and the parties they represent into accepting the rules of this non-competitive game.

Yet, the fact that the majority of political parties accept, or have at least come to terms with the role of elections as defined from above, is not something which can be attributed solely to government imposed constraints. Political parties, it would seem, also contribute to this predicament. The fact that legalised political parties provide their candidates with minimal financial and organisational support for example, appears to affect the role of elections from a number of perspectives. The most significant of these appears to be the near absence of party identification by the voters. A process which in turn leaves candidates with little choice but to focus upon the promotion of themselves as the main form of voter

⁴⁴³ Personal Interview, 31 December 1994.

recruitment. The clientelist base of voter support which accompanies such personalistic political behaviour, we have subsequently argued, further helps to reaffirm the clientelist role of elections.

Conclusion

Prevailing and Potential Consequences of Multi-Party Elections in Mubarak's Egypt.

It would seem that the personalised system of rule established by Nasser following the 1952 'revolution' has remained intact to date. Reflective of this is that following Nasser's death, his personally appointed successor, Anwar Sadat, managed to dominate the political arena for ten years until his own demise in 1981. At the time, Sadat's personally appointed vice-president smoothly assumed office and remains, to date, President of the Egyptian Republic. On the basis of the powers he inherited upon taking office, President Mubarak, like his predecessors, Nasser and Sadat, has thus remained the ultimate source of power and authority in contemporary Egypt.

The fact remains however that personal authoritarian rule can never be fully institutionalised. Instead, regimes of this nature are characterised by an "inherent uncertainty" based upon "vulnerability to, or dependency on, the wills, wiles, and abilities of others."⁴⁴⁴ In other words, because an institutionalised system: "in which individuals and organisations engage publicly to win the right to govern or to influence a government's policies within an overall and legitimate framework of agreed-upon rules"⁴⁴⁵ does not exist in personal authoritarian regimes, the ruler's position in power is thus inherently linked to a number of factors. The two most important of which are the armed forces and the position of other political actors.

In the case of post-1952 Egypt, the extensive patronage bestowed by Egypt's' consecutive Presidents upon the armed

⁴⁴⁴ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Rosberg, (1982), P26.

⁴⁴⁵ R.H. Jackson and C.G. Rosberg, (1982), P1.

forces, along with the President's clientelist powers of appointment at the highest level of this establishment, have shaped the role of the Egyptian armed forces as the ultimate protectors of the post-1952 political system. Furthermore, the enormous powers of the Presidency including control over the coercive powers of the state, overall control of the resources of the state and a President-friendly legal-constitutional framework, all constitute major factors which have contributed towards weakening the position of political actors and organisations, whilst preserving the pre-eminent position of the Egyptian President. In such a context, we have argued in this thesis that non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt can best be viewed as an additional mechanism which is used to hinder the development of organised political participation and thus further contribute towards the consolidation of Presidential power and the preservation of the political status-quo.

Extent to which the electoral system has
accomplished its role as an instrument
of clientelist co-option and control

We started this thesis by questioning the role of non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt. We maintained the view that since these elections do not affect the replacement or succession of government, then we must focus upon their role for the government rather than for the individual voter. As a means of legitimising regime rule, non-competitive multi-party elections in Mubarak's Egypt have a limited role. Instead, non-competitive multi-party elections in contemporary Egypt, as we have argued in this thesis, function predominantly as a tool with which the Mubarak regime reaffirms and expands the clientelist structure which links central authorities to those on the periphery.

Multi-party elections within the government-defined arena seem to have encouraged and expanded an overall pattern of

participation in which intra-party rivalry, political individualism, patronage and parochialism all play an important role. The expansion of links between political parties and voters on the basis of programmatic and ideological stands is consequently an issue which appears to be overlooked by voters in favour of both received and anticipated rewards which are predominantly channelled from the centre. In other words, these rewards further encourage the clientelist chain of dependence leading to the centre. This clientelist chain of dependence in turn, seems to have made it less difficult for the government to define the role of political actors officially representing disparate political parties as intermediaries between central government and those on the periphery.

The development of political parties as organised group entities in such a context, is not a process which Egypt's multi-party arena of political contest has aimed to produce. Participation within the prevailing arena of political contest for example, appears to have greatly contributed towards ensuring that the President's own party, the NDP, comprises little more than a conglomerate of personalities each possessing their own personal network of supporters. Indeed, a dominant party structured along such lines is easier for the President to control, especially when government initiated legislation needs to be formalised in the People's Assembly. Yet, in the absence of group organisation, party cohesiveness, and strong links binding supporters to the party itself rather than to personalities who also happen to be party members, the NDP cannot be viewed as an institutionalised political entity that can maintain its current position without the President's chairmanship and patronage.

We also found that the utilisation of the electoral arena to entice opposition parties to enter the same system of clientelist co-option and control as that practised on the NDP does not appear to have been difficult for the Mubarak regime. Apart from the Labour Party and the Nasserite

Party, the behaviour of the other 'major' legalised opposition parties (the Tajammu', the Liberals and the Neo-Wafd), demonstrate this to be the case.

The various constraints imposed on political participation, in addition to the limited resources accessible to these parties, can be regarded as the two major factors which have contributed towards their weak position and hence inducement to enter the electoral chain of clientelist dependence and control. In fact, it would not be erroneous to suggest that if it was not for the support it receives as a result of its alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood Organisation, the Labour Party would also have been tempted to follow suit. In the absence of such an ally, the Nasserite Party appears to be in a rather vulnerable position.

It is not inconceivable for the Nasserite Party to also join forces with the Muslim Brotherhood in order to strengthen its position. In addition to the Labour Party, this, for example, was an avenue previously pursued by both the Neo-Wafd and the Liberals respectively. However, as these parties later discovered, it is difficult to maintain separate and equal identities within a political partnership. As the Neo-Wafd's deputy-secretary general explains, following the 1984 electoral alliance:

" Shaykh Salah 'Abu Isma'il, who was the main connection in the operation between the Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood, tried to convince us to join his organisation in more than an election partnership. He wanted to push the Wafd into Islamist thought and ideology...[but this was not possible] because Wafd ideology is too different from the Muslim Brotherhood ideology."⁴⁴⁶

The decision of the Labour Party to relinquish its socialist stand in favour of a more Islamically oriented one largely explains why the party, since 1987, has managed

⁴⁴⁶ Personal interview, 'Ali Salama, 8 January 1995.

to maintain an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood.⁴⁴⁷ The point here, therefore, is that the Nasserite Party could enter an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood. But the government's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood prior to the 1995 elections, and the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood constitutes an organisation whose ideology and political history is totally incompatible with the Nasserist legacy which the Nasserites believe they represent, makes it more likely that the Party might instead be induced into covert government co-option.

The vulnerable position which the Nasserite Party has found itself to be in following the legislative elections of 1995, in which it won only one seat, appears to further reinforce the above possibility. The Party's Chairman, Dhiya al-Din Dawud for example, was, according to his personal assistant, showing signs of depression after losing the seat he had previously won in 1990 (competed for as Independent during 1990 elections) in his home constituency of Sariskur.⁴⁴⁸ Whilst this might appear an exaggerated observation, the fact that Dawud's personal assistant noticed her boss was spending long hours alone in his office, refusing to meet anyone except in the most urgent of circumstances, indicates at least that low morale prevailed at the highest level of the Party. This is arguably regarded as a positive sign by the government since it suggests the Party is experiencing a sense of weakness and defeat - especially since it had won three seats in the previous elections before it was even officially a party - that could induce it re-consider entry into the government's clientelist system of co-option and control sooner rather than later.

⁴⁴⁷ The decision of Ibrahim Shokri, Chairman of the Labour Party, to adopt an Islamic stand was not without problems. Members loyal to the ideology of socialism, for example, vented their frustration during a party conference held in 1989 by shouting slogans such as: "Shoukry sold the party to the Muslim Brothers" and "How much were you paid, Shoukry?" - H.F. Singer, (1993), P19.

⁴⁴⁸ Personal interview, Mme Hekam, 19 December 1995.

The utilisation of the electoral arena as a clientelist mechanism with which to co-opt and control political parties is logically a tactic aimed at ensuring these parties remain weak and thus unable to challenge the existing political order. It is probably reassuring for the government therefore, that the participation of opposition parties in elections has produced an overall pattern of activity not too dissimilar to that of the NDP. In other words, a parochial-oriented, personalistic mechanism of cultivating voter support. As such, patterns of participation appear to have hindered the development of political parties as a strong, cohesive group entity that could potentially challenge the political status quo. It is not too suprising that the prevalence of such a form of activity within the multi-party electoral arena, seems to be encouraged by the President. Reflective of this is the fact the President publicly urged voters, during the elections of 1995, to: "go to the polling stations and vote for the candidate best able to shoulder the responsibility, regardless of his or her party orientations and commitments."⁴⁴⁹

The President's urging of voters to ignore party politics and instead concentrate upon the candidate's personal abilities may indeed be beneficial to the regime in so far as it further hinders the expansion of party links with the masses. Yet perhaps more problematic is that encouraging allegiance to candidates on a personal and hence clientelistic level also appears to encourage electoral violence.

The problem of electoral violence

Carl Landé notes that conflict tends to emerge when participating parties and groups are characterised by: "unstable membership, uncertain duration, personalistic leadership, a lack of formal organisation, and by a greater concern with power and spoils than with ideology or

⁴⁴⁹ The Egyptian Gazette, 17 December 1995.

policy"⁴⁵⁰. In such a context, as the author explains, conflict emerges because the aim of participants is to bring benefit to leaders and adherents. Yet the problem is that: "The losers in such zero-sum games are likely to be resentful, to hope for a turn-about in which they can "put down" their opponents as they have been put down themselves. This leads to the related subject of feuding."⁴⁵¹ In contrast to group feuding whereby individual "conflicts of obligation do not arise", feuds within the confines of personality based politics: "are more easily begun and harder to contain."⁴⁵² This is because in such a setting:

"An injury to any individual leads to the clustering around him of those upon whom he has which claims for support, minus those who have conflicting obligations to the other side. A similar cluster forms around his opponent. The ensuing violence which others than the primary rivals may suffer - especially if vengeance is inflicted on substitute victims - creates new persons with grievances... the result... may be an endless succession of killings between shifting groups of partisans whose composition at any point in time depends upon the identity of the latest victim and the next victim to be."⁴⁵³

Along these lines, one can detect similar patterns emerging in Egypt. In fact, by the 1995 legislative elections, electoral violence had escalated for "the first time in the history of [Egyptian] parliamentary elections" to an unprecedented level which left, according to the Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid, fifty-one people dead and 878 others wounded.⁴⁵⁴ One such example was in the electoral constituency of Naja' Hammadi, in Upper Egypt. In this case, an unidentified person fired shots which killed a

⁴⁵⁰ C.H. Landé, (1977), Pxxxii.

⁴⁵¹ C.H. Landé, (1977), Pxxxii.

⁴⁵² C.H. Landé, (1977), Pxxxiii.

⁴⁵³ C.H. Landé, (1977), Pxxxiii.

⁴⁵⁴ Final Report on the Legislative Elections in Egypt 1995, Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid, Cairo, December 1995, P50.

supporter of Al-Sayyed Al-Menūfi, a prominent Independent candidate. Assuming that the hitman was probably linked to Fahmī 'Omar, the NDP's official candidate, and Al-Menūfi's biggest rival, an armed confrontation erupted between the supporters of both candidates. The confrontation had, by the end of that day, claimed the lives of seven people and left more than double that number wounded. Included in the fatalities were 'Omar's (who did eventually win the elections) son and nephew.⁴⁵⁵

The fact that electoral violence prevails between Independent candidates and official NDP candidates can arguably be regarded as another, more extreme, reflection of the individualistic intra-party rivalry that exists (and is encouraged) within the NDP.⁴⁵⁶ This view is further reinforced in view of the fact that of the one hundred and eleven seats won by Independents during the 1995 election, ninety-nine of them were NDP members who were: "not nominated by the party in the election battle."⁴⁵⁷ As one prominent political analyst notes:

"It is hard to explain how, after claiming so many victims, the electoral battle ended in such a sweeping victory for one party. No one can believe that these casualties were the result of confrontations between one party which won over 90 percent of the votes and fourteen opposition parties which together managed to win only 14 seats! They are seen rather, as reflecting the vicious in-fighting among the candidates of the National Democratic Party (NDP) itself, or among its candidates and defectors from the NDP who ran as 'independents' when not nominated by the party and who, on being elected, returned to its ranks."⁴⁵⁸

The prevalence of electoral violence between NDP candidates and opponents representing the opposition parties, nevertheless, cannot be ignored. In fact, the supporters of

⁴⁵⁵ Al-Ahram Weekly, 14-20 December 1995.

⁴⁵⁶ As previously discussed in chapter 3, in particular, PP22-30.

⁴⁵⁷ Al-Ahram Weekly, 14-20 December 1994.

⁴⁵⁸ Muḥammad Sid 'Aḥmad, Al-Ahram Weekly, 14-20 December 1994.

Mustafa Bakri - a Liberal Party candidate whose campaign we followed during the 1995 elections - were, on several occasions, involved in physical confrontations with the supporters of Muhammad Mahjub (NDP), the then Minister of Religious Endowments and Bakri's main rival.

During one such incident, we had just attended a major campaign gathering held jointly by Mahjub and three other senior NDP candidates in Helwan's youth club. Shortly after leaving the club, we met in the street one of Bakri's aides who informed us that Bakri was at the local police station filing a complaint against Mahjub. Joined by the aide, we made our way to the police station in order to join Bakri and enquire about the problem. However, since the Minister of Religious Endowments had reached the station before us, the place was sealed off for security reasons. Yet, it was not too long before the Minister left with his extensive entourage in tow and we were thus allowed to join Bakri in the Ma'mur's (chief of police) office.

As it turned out, some of Mahjub's supporters had apparently been sent to disrupt an electoral gathering Bakri was also holding that same evening in a Khama (tent) in Helwan. These supporters, it would seem, were not simply content with smashing the parked vehicles belonging to Bakri's entourage, but had also decided to throw stones at the constituents attending Bakri's gathering. Paradoxically, a van full of police which had been sent on that particular occasion to ensure Bakri supporters did not disrupt the important NDP gathering held by Mahjub and his NDP counter-parts, resulted in the police shooting bullets in the air to ward off Mahjub supporters. Those who continued the violence were subsequently arrested. The Minister as we therefore discovered, had gone to the police station immediately after his electoral gathering in order to bail out his arrested supporters.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁹ Personal attendance of Helwan Police Station, 25 November 1995.

It is worth noting that the violence that was escalating between Mahjub and Bakri supporters, constituted the main reason Bakri pulled out of the race on the second election day. Election day was on Wednesday 29 November 1995. However, since neither Mahjub or Bakri managed to gain an absolute majority (i.e. over 50 percent of the total votes), the candidates, like hundreds of others nationwide, were compelled to compete in the second round of elections held on Wednesday 6 December. In contrast to the first round of election, the second round did not require any candidate to surpass the 50 percent mark, but only to gain the most votes.

During the first round of election, it became clear that violence might erupt when Mahjub's brother Isma'il, surrounded by a personal army of bodyguards wearing Mahjub T-shirts, arrived along with a group of Mahjub supporters at one of the main polling stations and started shouting indecent slogans such as: "Bakri is a passive homosexual."⁴⁶⁰ Since this group appeared very intimidating, Bakri supporters had little choice but to ignore these remarks. However, at that same polling station, one of Mahjub's wives, Saleha Sa'id, was noted by a female poll-watcher as having voted four times (the polling station was in fact a girl's school of which Sa'id was headmistress). As she confronted Sa'id, the young woman found herself on the floor, being punched and kicked by Isma'il's bodyguards.⁴⁶¹ It is perhaps the helplessness Bakri supporters felt on the first election round, that led some of these individuals to attend the second and final election round better equipped to deal with Mahjub supporters.⁴⁶² However, by one-thirty that afternoon Bakri had decided to pull out of the race.

⁴⁶⁰ Middle East Times Egypt, 3-9 December 1995.

⁴⁶¹ Middle East Times Egypt, 3-9 December 1995.

⁴⁶² In fact one of Bakri's supporters was arrested that day for possessing sixty-eight molotov cocktails. See: Middle East Times Egypt, 10-16 December 1995.

It is unlikely, for various reasons previously discussed, that Bakri would have beaten the Minister. In fact, Bakri was aware that critics might accuse him of trying to save face by pulling out before it was officially confirmed that he had lost the election. This indeed, could be true. According to Bakri however, his main concern was to prevent the bloodshed he felt would become inevitable as the events of that morning unfolded: "What other sensible choice was there? Isma'il [Mahjub's brother] had arrived with no less than six-hundred *baltajeyya* (thugs) and they looked ready for war."⁴⁶³

Whilst Bakri may have had the sense to direct his supporters out of potential danger at the last moment, the point remains that both Mahjub and Bakri held senior positions within the NDP and the Liberal Party respectively yet were competing against each other as rival personalities not as candidates representing different party points of view. Their supporters were tied to them therefore, by personal ties of loyalty. Violent confrontations between the supporters of both men cannot, in such a context, be totally unexpected. What is unexpected however, is for President Mubarak, on the topic of electoral violence, to note that:

"In the pre-revolution era there were some battles in certain constituencies during the election races as feudal families, who dominated these areas, insisted on entering the parliament. Now the outbreak of violence is quite strange after feudalism was abolished."⁴⁶⁴

The President himself has been noted to urge voters to choose a candidate on the basis of personal qualities rather than on party considerations. Moreover, it would appear that his government is determined, through the enforcement of formal and informal barriers, to hinder the development of genuine multi-party competition, preferring

⁴⁶³ Personal Interview, 20 December 1995.

⁴⁶⁴ The Egyptian Gazette, 15 December 1995.

instead to utilise elections as a mechanism of reaffirming and expanding its clientelist grip over political participation. Electoral violence, therefore should not really be regarded by the President as "strange". Rather, it should be seen as one of the major consequences of his reluctance to allow, after nearly two decades in power, genuine multi-party elections to develop.

Indeed, the President has frequently justified his actions by pointing out his concern for Egypt's stability and the view that: "There is a very thin line between democracy and anarchy".⁴⁶⁵ Yet one can also argue that the prevailing electoral system is not particularly conducive to Egypt's long-term stability prospects. Of-course on one level, the electoral violence which appears on the increase, may not necessarily be regarded as threatening to the immediate stability of Egypt because such action is predominantly confined to political rivalry between individual actors and their personal network of supporters. Yet, on another level, one should not overlook the fact that such violence is largely a consequence of the individualistic, parochially-confined, clientelistically-oriented patterns of participation that the regime seems to encourage through its 'multi-party' electoral arena. Such a strategy on the part of government is arguably more detrimental to Egypt's long-term stability prospects than the "anarchy" which President Mubarak maintains is so closely linked to democracy. These patterns of participation in Egypt's multi-party arena after all, cannot be regarded as beneficial in terms of eradicating the winner-takes-all mentality which is currently reflected on the parochial level through violent confrontations between individual candidates and their supporters.

It would not be erroneous to suggest that the regime's efforts to encourage political parties to view participation in elections as a process through which its

⁴⁶⁵ The Egyptian Gazette, 17 December 1995.

members and their supporters can become part of the existing political system and thus gain access to some of the resources it controls, can also contribute towards potential violence on another level. This is because those parties and groups (namely the Muslim Brotherhood and its long-term ally, the Labour Party) who do not want to accept the rules of this game appear to be increasingly excluded from the prevailing 'multi-party' arena. The government's overt crack-down on Muslim Brotherhood members and their allies prior to the 1995 elections, as we discussed in chapter three,⁴⁶⁶ illustrates this to be the case. The point is that in pursuing this strategy, one can argue that the government is not so much eradicating the Islamic organisation as it is pushing it away from electoral contest and into clandestine and illegal channels of participation. This in turn increases the possibility of further political violence in contemporary Egypt.

More potential consequences relating
to the prevailing electoral system

Since multi-party elections appear to be used by the regime to contain rather than strengthen party organisation and develop multi-party participation, political parties, whether one is referring to the Presidentially chaired NDP or any of the legalised opposition parties, have been unable to: "become the buckle which binds one social force to another...[thus creating] a basis of loyalty and identity transcending more parochial groupings."⁴⁶⁷ Consequently, Egypt's formal multi-party arena is, realistically, no more institutionalised than a weak single system. As Huntington explains:

"In a strong multi-party system a one-to-one relationship tends to exist between social forces and political parties... Such a strong system can exist only with a high level of mobilisation and political participation. If the latter are limited,

⁴⁶⁶ See for example: "The Muslim Brotherhood and the Labour Party" in section 3.3, chapter three.

⁴⁶⁷ S. P. Huntington, (1968), P405.

the social forces active in politics are limited, and the social base for a strong multiparty system thus does not exist. If a multiparty system does exist in these circumstances it typically reflects differences of clique and family within a restricted elite. The poor institutionalisation and narrow support for the parties in such a multiparty system makes that system extremely fragile. The step from many parties to no parties and from no parties to many parties, consequently, is an easy one. In their institutional weakness the no-party and the multiparty system closely resemble each other."⁴⁶⁸

Along these lines, one can argue that under the Mubarak regime, efforts to prevent high levels of mobilisation do not simply mean that multi-party participation is subsequently limited to the desired role of reinvigorating and expanding the vertically-based clientelist structure of dependence and domination. It also means that the multi-party arena of political contest is not sufficiently institutionalised to continue functioning without further increasing the demands on resources from the centre.

The issue of resources

In the first case, the multi-party arena in Mubarak's Egypt does not (nor, as we have argued, is it intended to) function as a mechanism through which political parties compete for control of government. Yet one cannot overlook the fact that the inclusion of opposition elements in the electoral arena produces, in the long-term, a significant expansion in the number of competing candidates for any one legislative seat. Reflective of this for example is the Minister of Interior's announcement that nearly four thousand candidates competed for the four hundred and forty-four available seats in the 1995 legislative elections.⁴⁶⁹ An average of ten candidates therefore competed, at the time, for each place in the Assembly. The

⁴⁶⁸ S. P. Huntington, (1968), PP423-24.

⁴⁶⁹ Al-Ahram Weekly, 14-20 December 1995.

1977 legislative elections in comparison, saw one thousand six hundred and sixty candidates representing the then newly created centre, right and left platforms along with independent candidates, compete for three hundred and forty-two Assembly seats.⁴⁷⁰ In other words, competition averaged just over four contestants per seat. The point here therefore, is that whilst the increase in the number of candidates competing in elections continues to have no affect on the choosing and replacement of government, it would be difficult to argue that such a predicament has not affected those who reach public office.

In view of the increasing number of competitors in elections, those who reach the People's Assembly, one can argue, are even more compelled to actually seek to fulfil the demands of their constituents with regard to the channelling of state controlled resources. This is because the increase in the number of electoral contestants, logically implies that the bargaining position of voters increases and hence the social approval of the constituents becomes more important for an incumbent deputy: he becomes more aware of the necessity of proving his superior abilities over his rivals, consequently, he must focus upon channelling as much state-controlled resources into his constituency as possible in order to maintain his local power-base, status and prestige within the community. It would seem, judging from the campaign strategies of outgoing deputies, that this predicament is already being encountered.⁴⁷¹

The increase in demands on resources from the centre may indeed serve to reinforce the role of incumbent deputies as predominantly intermediaries between those on the periphery and central government. The clientelist chain linking those on the periphery to the centre is theoretically

⁴⁷⁰ M. N. Cooper, (1982), P205.

⁴⁷¹ See for example the: "Renewing and expanding existing base of voter support" and "Renewing and expanding existing base of voter support (2)" in section 4.4, chapter four.

strengthened as a result. The problem nevertheless is that an electoral system which- as is the case in Mubarak's Egypt- functions predominantly on the basis of: "concrete material incentives rather than ties of affection or deference", is in the long-run more inclined to produce what James C. Scott terms 'inflationary patron-client democracy'.⁴⁷² What this means is that the distributive pressures and hence the expense entailed in the maintenance of such a system is largely beyond the economic capacity of the regimes which hold them, hence making it even more difficult to avoid running into budget deficits and other forms of financial crises.

In the case of Egypt's contemporary electoral system, the informal nature of distribution, as well as the lack of detailed government expenditure reports make it impossible to determine the amount of financial and material inducements used by the Mubarak regime to sustain itself. Nevertheless, such a patronage-based electoral system appears to be the only 'multi-party' system the Mubarak regime has been willing to consider. And at the lowest (and hence largest) tier of the clientelist structure, voters have also come to expect the material inducements it offers in return for support, or at least acquiescence. In such a context, it would be very difficult for the government to attempt altering the nature of such elections without the risk of undermining the basis of its own domination in the process.

Moreover, the fact remains that it is possible that as demands on the centre continue to increase, the inability to deal with such demands means that the electoral system intended to strengthen and expand the government's clientelist control over political participation, may in the long-term, lead to an erosion of the domination it originally was intended to reaffirm. In such a context, the issue of whether Egypt's current 'multi-party' arena can

⁴⁷² J.C. Scott, (1977), P142.

survive in the post-Mubarak era leaves open a large question. This is not simply because of the drain on resources which these elections entail, but also because of several other factors which should be taken into consideration. The first of which is the political orientation of the individual who assumes the Presidency.

The post-Mubarak era and some
other factors to be considered

Since President Mubarak has been reluctant to appoint a Vice-President, an apparent successor does not therefore exist. If the President were to die in office without an heir apparent, the formal procedure would be for the Assembly Speaker to temporarily assume the Presidency until three quarters of the Assembly, i.e. the NDP, agree on a new President to present to the people through referendum. The point however, is that if a power struggle ensues between certain members of the elite for the position of the President, the weakness of the NDP as an organised group strongly suggests the 'ruling' party's role in the decision would be very limited indeed. Moreover, the weakness of the NDP and the fact that as the dominant party, it has little, if any experience, in mobilising mass support means that should Mubarak's successor decide, for one reason or another, to disband the NDP and create his own party, or indeed, to suspend elections indefinitely, the NDP, regardless of its current status, would hardly be in a position to oppose such a decision.

Should the arena of electoral contest remain intact for the foreseeable future, thus allowing Mubarak's successor to continue in the same electoral strategy of clientelist co-option and hence control, one still cannot overlook the issue of opposition parties. At this point in time, the formal and informal constraints imposed on the legalised opposition parties have made it less difficult under the Mubarak regime for the majority of these parties to be co-opted into the electoral patron-client structure we have discussed in this thesis. Yet, as we have also discussed,

particularly in chapter four, the use of elections to co-opt members of the opposition has also been made easier as a result of the weak organisational structure of these parties. The weak organisational structure for example, which compels individual candidates to organise their own electoral campaigns and as a consequence recruit personal, rather than party, based support.

It is difficult to overlook, in this context, the fact that all five 'major' opposition parties in Egypt's contemporary arena have, since their establishment, been headed in a rather personalistic manner by elderly individuals whose political careers have spanned no less than three decades. It would not be unexpected therefore, with the demise of these leaders in the foreseeable future, to notice - as a consequence of new, younger, leadership- some significant changes in the organisational structure, and hence attitude, of at least some of these parties. Put differently, the personalistic cliques which currently appear to characterise the nature of opposition parties in contemporary Egypt, cannot, realistically, function as such in the absence of their 'founders'. New opposition leaders might be more inclined than their predecessors to establish a more effective organisational structure which would strengthen their respective parties as cohesive groups, and theoretically, help to expand its links to larger sectors of society on a more binding basis.

In fact, divisions between old and young party members with regard to party direction and structure can already be detected. A few younger members of the Nasserite Party for example, have begun to air their discontent about existing Party leadership. Indicative of this are the blunt views expressed prior to the 1995 legislative elections. One such view was expressed by Hamdin Sabahi, a member of the Party's political bureau, who questioned the legitimacy of the Party's current leadership. As he put it: "What did they do for the movement? their only qualification is that they were state employees under Nasser, but this doesn't

give them legitimacy."⁴⁷³ 'Amin Iskandar, the Party's secretary for cultural affairs, was even more to the point. In his opinion: "I believe it is time for all these declining figures to disappear, leaving the stage for the younger generation."⁴⁷⁴ Whilst this younger generation of party members have yet to take control of the party, such attitudes nevertheless reflect the potential emergence of an opinionated set of opposition leaders who might actually possess sufficient ambitions and energy to challenge the political status-quo.

The relative absence of personalistic leadership within the contemporary Muslim Brotherhood, and its organisational efficiency, as we discussed in chapter four,⁴⁷⁵ is illustrative of how, under enormous government imposed constraints, it is still possible for political organisations to function within the prevailing political system, as cohesive, and thus potentially challenging group entities. The point worth stressing therefore, is that a potentially strong political party which appears to have some appeal to certain sectors of the population and indeed, possesses the capability to bind these masses to it through an effective organisational structure, already exists in the form of the 'illegal' Muslim Brotherhood Organisation. It is not therefore impossible for at least one or two of the legalised political parties to also develop along similar lines in contemporary Egypt. The potential development of opposition parties in this direction, would mean, as is currently the case for the Muslim Brotherhood, that it would be difficult to expect these parties to accept an electoral system that continues to be structured along the lines we have discussed in this thesis.

⁴⁷³ Al-Ahram Weekly, 9-15 November 1995.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid..

⁴⁷⁵ See for example: "Brotherhood support: one candidate's case" in section 4.3, chapter four.

Even in the unlikely event that none of the formal opposition parties manage to develop into much more than the weak entities they currently are, the Muslim Brotherhood on its own constitutes, and is most likely to continue to constitute, a large thorn in the side of Egypt's existing political system. The regime's crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood in recent years, and in particular, prior to the 1995 legislative elections, is a clear indication that the participation of those who reject the prevailing political system are not tolerated in the 'multi-party' arena of political contest. One main point that appears to be overlooked by the government with regard to this strategy however, is that the Muslim Brotherhood is much more organised and structured than the personalistic cliques which continue to characterise the legalised political parties in contemporary Egypt. Consequently, it would be rather naive if the authorities were to expect the organisation to be irrevocably destroyed as a consequence of repressive tactics such as the imprisonment of some Muslim Brotherhood personalities.

Moreover, the tactic of utilising multi-party elections as a mechanism of clientelist co-option and control rather than as a mechanism to promote party development and the expansion of genuine party competition means that the threat of religious radicalism cannot, realistically, be efficiently challenged. President Mubarak himself has aired his concern about not wanting to repeat the Algerian experience.⁴⁷⁶ Yet the role of the electoral arena in hindering the development of organised political participation within a legal-constitutional framework, is a strategy he seems willing to maintain in order to preserve the political status-quo.

⁴⁷⁶ This, for example was the President's justification during a personal discussion with Muhammed Sid Ahmad on the limitations of electoral participation in Egypt. Personal Interview with M.S. Ahmad, 8 December 1994, Cairo.

The Muslim Brotherhood thus remains the main challenger to power in Egypt's 'multi-party' arena even though it is not officially recognised as a political party. This one can argue is not necessarily because the Muslim Brotherhood constitutes an enormously strong entity which seems controllable only through government repression. Rather, it is because the legalised, secular political parties, including the President's own NDP, are neither encouraged by the regime, nor are they provided with sufficient opportunity, to develop into strong political entities that could legitimately challenge and potentially marginalise such a threat. The reluctance to pursue a strategy of this nature is because it would logically obliterate the main function which 'multi-party' elections in Mubarak's Egypt are intended. The development and institutionalisation of a strong multi-party electoral arena, after all, cannot be expected to safeguard against religiously-inspired politics whilst at the same time keeping the existing system of personal authoritarian rule intact. Consequently, non-competitive multi-party elections are more beneficial in contemporary Egypt when utilised as a tool to reaffirm and expand the regime's clientelist structure of dependency and hence control. It is unlikely therefore, that a significant change with regard to the role of these elections will be witnessed in the near future.

Consideration of findings: a general perspective

As we have pointed out in this thesis, the adoption of a formal democratic framework can, on the international level, provide an authoritarian regime with limited legitimacy insofar as such a move signals "its good conduct to the outside world"⁴⁷⁷ and in some case makes it easier for Western states to provide it with aid.⁴⁷⁸ Yet, on the national level, non-competitive multi-party elections appear less significant as tool of legitimization. This

⁴⁷⁷ G. Hermet, (1978), P15.

⁴⁷⁸ As pointed out in the case of Egypt for example. See R. Owen, (1994), P190.

would seem to be particularly the case in view of the absence, in such political systems, of a dominant party based on a strong ideological or programmatic position, the reluctance of rulers to endorse wide scale mobilisation, and most importantly, the fact that elections of this nature do not affect the replacement or succession of government. Thus the fact that an authoritarian regime can preserve the political status quo whilst at the same time holding multi-party elections, significantly with minimal use of the state's coercive apparatus, highlights, in conclusion, the power of patronage as a mechanism of clientelist co-option and control.

The importance of patronage, as we discussed in this thesis, lies largely in the fact that such a process appears to hinder the development and expansion of potentially challenging parties and groupings which are based upon categorical ties such socio-economic interests or conceptions. This is because with patronage ultimately under the direct control of the ruler and his government, it is possible to distribute to the masses tangible and other forms of reward in return for regime-directed support. In fact, the prospect of obtaining a share of government controlled resources in return for political support, or at least acquiescence, can be very enticing in societies where authoritarian regimes tend to thrive. In other words, societies where there is a general scarcity of resources and where reliable avenues to deal with economic survival do not exist. As a mechanism of social control therefore, patronage performs an important role in reinvigorating and reaffirming the vertical patterns of clientelist dependency.

This, in turn, makes it very difficult for categorical bonds of social solidarity to develop. Put simply, when voters come to expect benefits that can realistically only be channelled from the centre, and when opinion-based voting is of little significance to the outcome of election, political actors, whether members of the 'ruling'

party or the opposition, are more tempted to seek the patronage of the power-holder. This in turn, means having to accept, at least publicly, the rulers' definition of "the rules of the game" if some electoral gains are achieved. In doing so, their role as representatives of a party point of view remains insignificant in comparison to their main role as intermediaries between the centre and those on the periphery. Consequently, whilst the clientelist chain linking those on the periphery to central government is strengthened and expanded as a result, it is difficult for political parties and groupings to develop into well organised and autonomous group entities. The context of multi-party elections in which patronage radiates from a single point in the political system (i.e. the ruler) therefore, is first and foremost advantageous to the regime that holds them.

In the final analysis, the importance of patronage for the long-term survival of certain authoritarian regimes is well illustrated within the context of non-competitive multi-party elections. After all, it would not be erroneous to suggest that in the absence of government-directed patronage, an authoritarian regime would find it extremely difficult to maintain peacefully for very long its dominant position within the framework of a multi-party arena. Indeed, as our study of Mubarak's Egypt has illustrated, an authoritarian regime's monopoly of various forms of patronage can provide it with the flexibility to utilise even a potentially threatening process such as multi-party elections very much to its own advantage. Whether the potential consequences of such strategies of rule, as raised in this chapter, eventually materialise, is best left to a future study on the subject.

Appendix

**Background Information on
Political Parties in Contemporary Egypt***

Party	Brief History	Composition
National Democratic Party (NDP)	Established by President Sadat in 1978 to succeed the Arab Socialist Misr Party - initially the Centre Platform that succeeded the Arab Socialist Union in 1976. The pre-revolutionary Nationalist Party which was established by nationalist-patriot Mustafa Kamel in 1907 was the inspiration behind the NDP name. As the ruling party, its official program is predominantly a reflection of the official rhetoric and policies of government: productive <i>infitaḥ</i> ; agricultural development leading to self-sufficiency in food production; public sector revitalisation leading to a strong state within a market-oriented economy; upholding of democracy and the multi-party system.	Technocrats; rural notables; government officials; businessmen, contractors etc. The President's Party. First headed by President Sadat; current Chairman, President Mubarak. Official Newspaper: <i>Mayo</i>

<p>The Liberal Party (al-Ahrar)</p>	<p>The party started political life in 1976 as one of the three platforms created by President Sadat. Very similar to Neo-Wafd in ideology. The Party, for example, advocates the principle of President through election; and political and economic liberalisation. The Party reversed its liberal policies, when, during its 1987 coalition with the Muslim Brotherhood, it used the Islamic slogan: "Islam is the Solution". No longer linked to the MB, it has reverted to its liberal stand.</p>	<p>Has little grass-roots support, although it is meant to represent the national bourgeoisie. This is perhaps a result of its shifting views and the fact its leader fully supported all of Sadat's initiatives, including the 1979 peace treaty with Israel. Headed by: Mostafa Kamel Murad, an ex-Free officer. Newspaper: Al-Ahrar</p>
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<p>The National Progressive Unionist Party: NPUP (Al-Tajammu')</p>	<p>Along with the NDP and the Liberal Party, the Tajammu' originated as one of the three platforms created by President Sadat before becoming a fully-fledged party in 1978. The 'leftist' label it held as a platform, continues to date with its advocating of workers rights; preservation and expansion of Nasser's social and economic reform; public sector; social justice and protection of the rights of the poor. Opponent of Israel and also of Islamic-based movements.</p>	<p>The Party appears to attract intellectuals and self-educated workers. Since its establishment, the Party has been headed by <u>Khaled Mohyi al-Din</u>, a member of the Revolutionary Command Council which comprised the group of officers who took power following the 1952 'revolution'. Newspaper: <u>Al-Ahali</u>.</p>
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<p>The Labour Party (previously the Socialist Labour Party)</p>	<p>Created by President Sadat in 1978 to represent a loyal opposition in his newly established multi-party arena. Until 1984 it officially represented a socialist platform based upon government planning; economic development in which public sector plays leading role; and the promotion of Arab unity. Strong anti-Israel stand. Between 1984-7, the Party underwent dramatic transformation based upon Islamic ideology. This move coincided with its electoral alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood in 1987. Its ties with the Muslim Brotherhood continue to date. Also, the Party's anti-Israeli position continues, but more focus on unity of Islamic states rather than simply Arab unity. Urges the amendment of the constitution to stress the Islamic identity of Egypt.</p>	<p>Headed by Ibrahim Shokri, previously Sadat's Minister of Agriculture. In 1936, Shokri along with the late 'Ahmad Husayn were among the founders of Misr al-Fatah (young Egypt), a nationalist political party which until 1984 was considered an important source of inspiration for the Socialist Labour Party. Ironically, it was 'Ahmad Husayn's Brother 'Adel, and son, 'Ahmad- both senior Party leaders and in the case of 'Adel, a renowned Marxist advocate- who played major roles in restructuring the Party along Islamic lines. Newspaper: Al-Sha'b.</p>
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The Neo-Wafd	<p>Originally established as the Wafd Party in 1919 by nationalist-patriot Sa'd Zaghlul, the party, along with all existing parties was suppressed following the coup of 1952. It reformed in 1978 but then in protest to a Presidential Decree issued by Sadat, it dissolved itself, only to re-emerge under the Mubarak Presidency shortly before the 1984 legislative elections. Official platform derived from its pre-1952 origins. Calls for President to be directly elected by the people (i.e. abolish affirmative referendum); the genuine encouragement of private enterprise and 'true' capitalism; removal of restrictions on political participation; greater civil liberties and a strict separation of powers in the presidential, legislative and judicial branches of government. Anti-Nasser stand, and following its 1984 electoral alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood Organisation, also came to hold anti-Islamist views.</p>	<p>Membership predominately comprising upper middle class professionals.</p> <p>Chairman (for life): Fu'ad Seraj al-Din ageing aristocrat who joined original party in 1936 becoming its Secretary-General in 1942.</p> <p>Newspaper: Al-Wafd.</p>
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<p>The Arab Democratic Nasserist Party (the Nasserites)</p>	<p>Established in 1991 by a few senior figures from the Nasser era, the Party aspires to carry the Nasser torch. Its official platform rejects Zionism and what it regards as American imperialism. In terms of economic development, the Party advocates self-reliance in which the state plays a central role. Arab unity is also a theme strongly advocated by the Party.</p>	<p>High level state officials from the Nasser era who lost favour when President Sadat took power in 1971. Middle aged people who campaigned for Nasserism as students in the Sadat era also constitute a bulk of party membership. Some university students attracted to the Nasser legacy also constitute a small part of Party membership.</p> <p>Headed by its principal founder: <u>Dhiya</u> al-Din <u>Dawud</u>, a cabinet minister and high ranking ASU official in the Nasser era. <u>Dawud</u> spent the entire Sadat era in prison after being sentenced to ten years in prison following Sadat's 1971 'corrective revolution'.</p> <p>Newspaper: <u>Al-'Arabi</u></p>
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<p>The Muslim Brotherhood Organisation</p>	<p>Although it does not possess legal party status, the Organisation's participation in the political competition in the Mubarak era warrants its inclusion. Originally founded in 1928 by <u>Hasan al-Banna</u>, the Organisation was banned in 1954 by President Nasser. Its return to the political arena was initially encouraged by Sadat who hoped it would counteract the perceived threat of leftist ideology. Its platform has changed little from the time of establishment. It views Islam not simply as a religion, but as a system which deals with all aspects of life; source of authority should be derived from the Holy Qur'an and Sunna (teachings of the Prophet <u>Muhammad</u>). Entered electoral alliance with the Neo-Wafd in 1984; in 1987 it entered electoral alliance with Labour and al-'Ahrar. Continues to have close relations with the Labour Party.</p>	<p>Attracts sectors of Egyptian society that comprise largely the educated poor: school teachers, clerical workers and unemployed university graduates etc.</p> <p>Supreme Guide: <u>Mostafa Mashhur</u> has occupied the position following the death of <u>Hamid 'Abu al-Nasr</u> in 1997. The General Guidance Bureau however, is the executive body responsible for formulating policies and running the activities of the Organisation.</p> <p>The constituents have their views expressed through their own assembly: the Shura Council.</p> <p>Has access to the Labour Party's newspaper <u>Al-Sha'b</u>. Its own monthly magazine <u>Al-Da'wa</u>, was established in 1976 and banned by Sadat in September 1981. It remains banned.</p>
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Splinter Parties: Al-Umma, Al-Takaful, Green Party, Unionist Democratic Party, Misr Arab Socialist Party.	all legalised but none have ever won a seat in electoral competition.	Made up predominately of founders with support from their friends and associates.
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* Information derived from various sources including party programmes and personal interviews with party members.

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Personal Interviews

As we stated in chapter one, personal interviews were predominately an on-going process whereby most interviewees were met on several occasions. All personal interviews however were undertaken in Egypt between October 1994-January 1995 and October 1995-January 1996. Those most relevant to our research were:

Dr Hamdi Al-Sayyed (member of People's Assembly, NDP and Head of the Egyptian Medical Association), Muhammad Al-Sayyed (member of People's Assembly, NDP), Dr Hamdi Faysal (member of People's Assembly, NDP) Dr 'Esam Al-'Eryan (senior Muslim Brotherhood leader, former secretary-general of the Egyptian Medical Association and former (1987-1990) Assembly member), Al-Ma'mun Muhammad Al-Hudhaybi (official spokesperson for the Muslim Brotherhood and former (1987-1990) Assembly member), Muhammad 'Akif (senior leader in the Muslim Brotherhood and former (1987-1990) Assembly member), Dhiya' Al-Din Dawud (chairman of Nasserite Party and Assembly member), Hamed Mahmud (deputy chairman, Nasserite Party), Jaber 'Abd Al-'Aziz (Nasserite Party Candidate, 1995 elections) 'Adel Husayn (senior member of the Labour Party and editor-in-chief of its newspaper, Al-Sha'b) Majdi Ahmad Husayn (former Assembly member, senior member of the Labour Party and editor of Al-Sha'b), 'Ali Salama (deputy-secretary general of the Neo-Wafd Party), Dr No'man Jom'a (deputy chairman, Neo-Wafd Party) Mona Makram 'Ubayd (ex- Neo-Wafd member and Presidential appointee to the Assembly, 1990-1995), Khaled Mohyi Al-Din (Assembly member and chairman of Tajammu' party), Lotfi Waked (deputy chairman, Tajammu' party), Dr Rif'at Sa'id (secretary general, Tajammu' party and Presidential

appointee to the Shura Council, 1995-), 'Abdel Al-Ghaffar Shokr (deputy secretary general, Tajammu' party) Al-Badri Farghali (member of Assembly, 1990- , Tajammu' party), Fatheyya 'Assal (senior Tajammu' member and electoral candidate 1995) Mostafa Bakri (senior member of the liberal party and editor of its newspaper, Al-Ahrar and candidate in 1995 elections), Fikri Al-Jazzar (Independent Assembly member under Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak (1990-5)), Mostafa Ja'far (independent electoral candidate, Helwan, 1995), Dr Mostafa Kamel Al-Sayyed (Cairo University), Dr Salwa Sha'rawi Jom'a (American University in Cairo), Dr Hoda 'Awadh (American University in Cairo), Dr Mostafa Al-Fiqi (Director of Diplomatic Institute), Dr Sa'd Al-Din Ibrahim (Director of Ibn Khaldoun Research Centre), Dr 'Ali Al-Din Helal Desugi, (Dean of Political Science and Economics College, Cairo University), Dr 'Abd Al-Mon'im Sayyed 'Ali (Director of Centre of Strategic Studies, Al-Ahram) 'Amr Hashem (researcher on Egyptian parliamentary affairs, Centre of Strategic studies, Al-Ahram), Dr 'Osama Ghazali Harb (Editor of Al-Siyasa Al-Dawliyya, Al-Ahram), Dr Wahid 'Abd Al-Majid, (editor of Al Hayat - Cairo branch, and editor of Al-Ahram's Centre of Strategic Studies Annual Report) Dr Hala Mostafa (senior researcher and specialist on Islamic movements in Egypt, Al-Ahram's Center of Strategic Studies) Muhammad Sid 'Ahmed (senior political analyst, Al-Ahram), Fahmi Howaydi (Islamic writer and senior political analyst, Al-Ahram) No'man Al-Zayyati (political and economic journalist, Al-Ahram Al-'Iqtisadi), Tahsin Bashir (retired ambassador and senior political analyst), Dr Muhammad 'Asfur (political analyst and ex-senior Neo-Wafd member) and General Muhammad Fawzi (minister of defence, 1968-71), disparate voters as quoted throughout thesis, including the kind people of Mit Nas (27 November-15 December 1995).

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